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OF

THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS.

Of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. By DAVID HARTLEY, M. A. *Lond.* 1749. p. 1.

This Tract is printed from the ſecond volume of Doctor *Hartley's* Obſervations on Man; it is written, as all the other parts of that work are, with ſingular cloſeneſs of thought; and to be well underſtood, muſt be read with great attention. *Grotius*; *Abbadie*; *Fabricius*; *Limborch*; *Jacquelot*; *Houtteville*; *Paſcal*; *Stillingfleet*; *Stackhouſe*; *Benſon*; *Clarke*; *Leland*; *Lardner*; *Macknight*; *Chandler*; *Jenkins*; *Stebbing*; *Jortin*; *Foſter*; *Nichols*, and a great many other authors, have taken laudable pains in proving the truth of the Chriſtian Religion; but I know not any author, *Grotius* excepted, who has, in ſo ſhort a compaſs, ſaid more to the purpoſe on that ſubject than Doctor Hartley has done, in the tract which is here republiſhed.

Of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, by JOSEPH ADDISON, Eſq. p. 76.

This poſthumous Treatiſe of Mr. Addiſon has been much eſteemed both at home and abroad; the general argument contained in it has been carried to a greater length by other authors ſince his time; eſpecially by Mr. *Correvon* of Geneva; by Profeſſor *Bullet* of Beſançon; and by Dr. *Lardner*, who has treated it in all its parts with great accuracy in his Collection of Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies to the truth of the Chriſtian Religion. There is, unfortunately, in many men, a ſtrange prepoſſeſſion againſt every thing written by Churchmen, in defence of the Chriſtian Religion;—that "Prieſts of all Religions are the ſame"—that "they defend altars on which their lives depend," with an hundred other expreſſions of a ſimilar tendency, are frequent in the mouths of unbelievers; we ſincerely forgive them this wrong: but as the charge of ſelfiſhneſs and hypocriſy cannot, with any ſhadow of propriety, be brought againſt Mr. Addiſon, and ſuch other laymen as have written in ſupport of Chriſtianity, we intreat them to give a ſober attention to what theſe unprejudiced Writers have advanced on the ſubject; ſurely, eternal Life is too important a concern to be jeſted away in ſarcaſtic witticiſm, and frothy diſputation.

Of the Argument for the Truth of Chriſtianity ariſing from the fulfilment of our Saviour's predictions concerning the deſtruction of the Temple, and the City of Jeruſalem, and the diſperſion of the Jews. Being the third Chapter of the firſt vol. of a Collection of Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies to the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. By N. LARDNER, D. D. 1764. p. 103.

The argument for the Truth of Chriſtianity which is taken from the *hiſtory* of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem as related by *Joſephus*, compared with our *Saviour's prediction* of that event recorded by the Evangeliſts Matthew, Mark, and Luke, has always been conſidered as one of the ſtrongeſt which can be urged, either againſt the Jews in particular, or againſt Unbelievers in general. In modern times this argument has been illuſtrated by *Jackſon* in the firſt volume of his works, 1673; by *Tillotſon* in the 12th vol. (8vo ed.) of his Sermons; by *Kidder* in his Demonſtration of the Meſſiah; by *Whitby* in his Commentary on St. Matthew, and in his General Preface; by *Sharpe* in a diſcourſe intituled, The Riſe and Fall of the Holy City and Temple of Jeruſalem, preached at the Temple Church, 1764; and, to mention no others, by *Jortin* in the firſt vol. of his Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. This author has alſo well proved, not only that the Goſpels, in which the predictions of Chriſt relative to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem are delivered, were written before that event; but that the predictions themſelves could not have been inſerted into the Goſpels, as interpolations, after the event: the reader will not eſteem this to have been an unneceſſary labour, who recollects the confidence with which *Voltaire*, with a view probably of evading the force of the Argument in queſtion, declares, that the Goſpels were written after Jeruſalem was deſtroyed—ſans doubte après la deſtruction de Jeruſalem.—Many an unbeliever is apt to think and ſay, that he would have faith in the Goſpel, if he could ſee a man raiſed from the dead, or any one notable miracle performed in atteſtation of its truth; now the completion of an ancient prophecy is, to us who ſee the completion, a Miracle; and I would ſincerely recommend it to every one, who is not ſteadfaſt in the faith, to examine carefully, and liberally, whether the prophecies—concerning Jeruſalem being trodden under foot of the Gentiles—concerning the ſterility of Paleſtine—the ſtate of the Jewiſh people—the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church of God—the apoſtaſy of the latter times—the Independency of the Arabs—the Servitude of Ham's poſterity, &c. have not been literally fulfilled. Theſe things are facts which fall within our own obſervation, and if we ſearch the Scriptures we ſhall find that theſe facts were predicted long before either we or our fathers were born.

The

The preſent conſtitution of the world, with reſpect to the civilization, the religion, the liberty, or ſlavery of the different empires which ſubſiſt in it, is but one ſtage of the completion of the various prophecies, which were of old delivered, concerning the fortunes of individuals, nations, and countries; we in our days may ſay what *Tertullian*, ſpeaking of the Accompliſhment of Scripture prophecy, ſaid in his —*Quicquid agitur prænunciabatur, quicquid videtur audiebatur.* The reader may find theſe ſubjects diſcuſſed by Bp. *Newton* in his diſſertations on the Prophecies; by *Whiſton* in his Accompliſhment of Scripture Prophecy; by *Sharpe* in his ſecond Argument in defence of Chriſtianity; by *Lardner* in his three Sermons on the circumſtances of the Jewiſh people, an Argument for the Truth of Chriſtianity; by the Author of the *Principes de la Foi Chrètienne*; by the Author of an Eſſay in the Univerſal Hiſtory, on The *Independency of the Arabs*; by Biſhops *Hurd*, *Hallifax*, and *Bagot*, in their ſermons preached at Warburton's Lecture; by Joſeph *Mede*; and Henry *More* in their reſpective works; and by *Worthington* in his Sermon preached at Boyle's Lecture, 1766, &c.

All the Actions recorded in the Goſpels are probable, p. 177.

This Tract is the 4th. chap. of the 1ſt. book of the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory by Macknight. The Title in page 177 is by miſtake printed wrong, as the tract itſelf was not intended to have been printed in this place. Young men ſhould render this ſhort tract familiar to them by a frequent peruſal of it; they will find in it very conciſe, but ſatisfactory anſwers to many objections, reſpecting ſome parts of our Saviour's conduct, the poſſibility and the credibility of miracles, &c. which are ſometimes ſeriouſly, oftener in wanton mockery of Religion, made ſubjects of common converſation, and which never fail to leave a bad impreſſion on the minds of thoſe who know not how to reply to them.

Of the Argument for the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion ariſing from the converſion of the world to Chriſtianity; taken from the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory. By JAMES MACKNIGHT, D. D. 1763. p. 199.

That great multitudes, out of every nation in the then known world, were converted from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity, within a few years after the death of Jeſus, is a fact allowed on all hands; the queſtion is, whether this fact can be properly urged as a deciſive proof of the divine Origin of the Chriſtian Religion. And, without doubt, the fact, abſtractedly conſidered, cannot. The extenſive propagation of a religion, how rapidly ſoever it may have been made,

made, is a proof of nothing but that the means were adequate to the end, the cauſe to the effect. A falſe Religion may be ſpeedily and widely ſpread by force or by fraud; or it may, by degrees, gain an extenſive eſtabliſhment in the world, from its being propitious to the follies, the vices, and paſſions of Mankind; or from its being firſt introduced in an unenlightened and credulous age; or in a country fitted by peculiar circumſtances to foſter and ſupport it; or from a concurrence of many other *human* means. This may be readily granted; but that the *Chriſtian* Religion ſhould have been *quickly* propagated from *Judea* through the *Roman Empire*, during the reigns of *Tiberius*, *Caligula*, *Claudius*, &c. by the *Human* abilities of the *Apoſtles*, appears to me to be an incredible fact. Thoſe who think otherwiſe would do well, in addition to the fact itſelf, to conſider the prophecies which were fulfilled when it took place. "What motive, ſays *Juſtin Martyr* in his Apology (Reeve's Tranſ.), could ever poſſibly have perſuaded us to believe a crucified man to be the firſt begotten of the unbegotten God, and that he would come to judge the world, had we not met with thoſe prophetic teſtimonies of him proclaimed ſo long before his Incarnation? Were we not Eye-witneſſes to the fulfilling of them? Did we not ſee the deſolation of Judea, and men out of all nations proſelyted to the faith of his Apoſtles, and renouncing the ancient errors they were brought up in? Did we not find the prophecies made good in ourſelves, and ſee Chriſtians in greater numbers, and in greater ſincerity, from among the Gentiles, than from the Jews and Samaritans?"—This argument has been inſiſted upon by *Henry More* in the firſt vol. of his works, where there is a chapter intituled, *Veritas Evangelii demonſtrata ex ſucceſſu*; by J. *Denne* in a diſcourſe printed 1725, intituled, The miraculous Succeſs of the Goſpel, a proof of its divine origin; by *Leſley* in his Short Method with the Deiſts; by *Millar* in his Hiſtory of the propagation of Chriſtianity and overthrow of Paganiſm; by *Tillotſon* in the 12th vol. of his Sermons; by *Leng* in his Sermons at Boyle's Lecture; by *Jortin* in his Truth of the Chriſtian Religion; by *Leland* in the vith chap. of the 2d part of his defence of Chriſtianity; by Bp. *Atterbury* in his two Sermons on the miraculous propagation of the Goſpel; by *Boſſuet* in his Diſcourſe on Univerſal Hiſtory; by *Lardner* in his Collection of Jewiſh Teſtimonies, by *Powell* in his 10th Diſcourſe; by *Benſon* in his Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity; and by *Young* in the 2d vol. of his Diſſertations on Idolatrous Corruptions, where, alſo, there is a compendious view, ſupported by proper authorities, of the countries, through which the Apoſtles travelled in propagating the Goſpel.

An Eſſay on the Man of Sin, from Benſon's Paraphraſe and Notes on St. Paul's Epiſtles. p. 268.

That the *Popiſh* Religion is the *Chriſtian* Religion, is a falſe poſition; and therefore Chriſtianity may be true, though the Religion

of

of the Church of Rome be, in many of its parts, an impoſture. This obſervation ſhould be always kept in mind by ſuch of our young men of faſhion, as are ſent to finiſh their education by travelling in Catholic countries. It may ſeem paradoxical to aſſert, that the corruptions of any religion can be proofs of its truth; yet the corruptions of the Chriſtian Religion, as practiſed by the Church of Rome, are certain proofs of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion; inaſmuch as they are exact completions of the prophecies which were delivered by *Daniel*, *St. Paul*, and *St. John* concerning that apoſtaſy from the faith, which was to take place in the latter times. I have known the infidelity of more than one young man happily removed, by ſhewing him the characters of Popery delineated by St. Paul in his prophecy concerning the Man of Sin (2 Theſ. 2. 1.), and in that concerning the apoſtaſy of the latter times (1 Tim. iv. 1.). Bp. Hurd, in his 7th ſermon at Warburton's Lecture, has given a conciſe hiſtory of the Charge of *Antichriſtianiſm*, which has, at different times, been brought againſt the Church of Rome. Dr. Whitaker, Regius Profeſſor of Divinity at Cambridge, in his exerciſe for his degree at the Commencement in 1582, ſupported this *Theſis*—*Pontifex Romanus* eſt ille *Antichriſtus* quem futurum Scriptura prædixit. He had, before that time, refuted the forty arguments by which Nicholas *Sander* boaſted, that he had demonſtrated—that the Pope was not Antichriſt. Whitaker's works are very well worth being looked into by thoſe, who would know what can be ſaid for and againſt the other principal points in controverſy between Proteſtants and Papiſts, as well as againſt this primary pillar of the reformed faith—That the Hierarchy of the Church of Rome is the *Little Horn* of Daniel; the *Man of Sin* of St. Paul; and the *Antichriſt* of St. John. The Evidence ariſing from the completion of the prophecies relative to the *Riſe*, *Character*, and *Fall* of the *Man of Sin*, is an increaſing Evidence; it ſtrikes us with more force than it ſtruck our Anceſtors before the Reformation; and it will ſtrike our Poſterity, who ſhall obſerve the different gradations of his decline, and his final cataſtrophe, with more force than it now ſtrikes us.

Obſervations on the Hiſtory and Evidence of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. By GILBERT WEST, Eſq. *Lond.* 1767. 6th. Ed. p. 289.

The Reſurrection of Chriſt is the very corner ſtone on which the hope of a Chriſtian is built; for, if Chriſt be not riſen, Chriſtianity is an impoſture; and if Chriſt be riſen, Chriſtianity is true; and Deiſm is a Deluſion. Whether Chriſt be, or be not riſen from the dead, is a queſtion of fact, and muſt be decided (not by metaphyſical diſquiſitions concerning the power of God to work a miracle, nor by nice ſubtilties concerning the ſufficiency of human Teſtimony to eſtabliſh the credibility of Miracles, but) by fairly eſtimating the weight of Evidence for and againſt the fact. The main Arguments

which

which are brought to invalidate the fact of the Reſurrection are deduced from the real, or ſeeming, differences in the accounts which the Evangeliſts have given of the circumſtances which attended it; and much labour has been employed in harmonizing the ſeveral accounts. But what if it ſhould be admitted (I do not ſay that the conceſſion is neceſſary), that the accounts cannot in every little point be made to agree? Will you for that reaſon diſbelieve the fact itſelf? As well might you have diſbelieved the report of thoſe who ſhould have ſaid, that they had ſeen the body of Cæſar dead, becauſe you would have found them diſagreeing, probably, in ſome minute points, relative to the number, or ſituation, of his wounds, to the time, or manner, of his being ſtabbed in the Capitol. A ſlight diſagreement, between the writers of the New Teſtament, in their relations of matters of fact, is entirely analogous to what may be obſerved every day in courts of Juſtice; no one, on account of a trifling difference in the teſtimonies of the witneſſes, ever thinks of queſtioning the exiſtence of the fact in which they all agree, or of impeaching either their integrity, or competency to eſtabliſh the fact. If the Evangeliſts do really differ from each other in their accounts of the Reſurrection of Jeſus, it is a proof that they did not write in concert, were not combined to impoſe a fable on the world; and it is a proof, alſo, that what they wrote was not inſpired in the manner which ſome, with more piety than judgment, have ſuppoſed it to have been. Let the Deiſts make the moſt they can of the variations which they think may be found in the Evangeliſts, yet will they never be able to prove, that the facts mentioned by theſe writers reſpecting the Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt, are not true; let them faſten upon the writers of the New Teſtament as much *human* infirmity as they can, yet will they never be able to prove that they were not *divinely* inſpired in what they delivered concerning the doctrines neceſſary to be believed, and the duties neceſſary to be performed, by all true diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt.—The book which is here printed has been much eſteemed, it has been tranſlated both into German and French, and may be of great uſe to thoſe whoſe religious principles are unſettled. *Macknight*, in his Harmony, has endeavoured to reconcile the ſeeming inconſiſtencies in the Evangeliſts relative to the reſurrection; *Lardner* publiſhed ſome judicious obſervations on *Macknight's* plan. *Benſon* has given his ſentiments on the ſubject of the reſurrection in his Life of Chriſt, and has anſwered the objections uſually made to it. Bp. *Newcom*, in his Harmony, may be conſulted on the ſubject with great advantage. A pamphlet, publiſhed many years ago, intituled, the Tryal of the Witneſſes of the Reſurrection of Jeſus, has been well received in the world; but the moſt ſolid Reaſoning on the ſubject may be met with in a diſcourſe concerning the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt by Humphrey *Ditton*, 5th ed. 1740. Fabricius, in the 44th chap. of his Delectus Argumentorum, mentions 28 different Authors on the Reſurrection, and in the ixth chap. of his Lux Evangelica he adds above 20 more; nor would it be a difficult taſk greatly to enlarge his catalogue.

OF

OF THE

TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

TO believe the Chriſtian religion, is to believe that Moſes and the prophets, Chriſt and his apoſtles, were endued with divine authority, that they had a commiſſion from God to act and teach as they did, and that he will verify their declarations concerning future things, and eſpecially thoſe concerning a future life, by the event; or, in other words, it is to receive the ſcriptures as our rule of life, and the foundation of all our hopes and fears. And as all thoſe who regulate their faith and practice by the ſcriptures are Chriſtians; ſo all thoſe who diſclaim that name, and paſs under the general title of unbelievers, do alſo diſavow this regard to the ſcriptures. But there are various claſſes of unbelievers. Some appear to treat the ſcriptures as mere forgeries; others allow them to be the genuine writings of thoſe whoſe names they bear, but ſuppoſe them to abound with fictions, not only in the miraculous, but alſo in the common part of the hiſtory; others again allow this part, but reject that; and, laſtly, there are others who ſeem to allow the truth of the principal facts, both common and miraculous, contained in the ſcriptures, and yet ſtill call in queſtion its divine authority, as a rule of life, and an evidence of a happy futurity under Chriſt our ſaviour and king. He, therefore, that would ſatisfy himſelf or others in the truth of the Chriſtian religion, as oppoſed by theſe ſeveral claſſes of unbelievers, muſt inquire into theſe three things:

Firſt, The genuineneſs of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments.

Secondly, The truth of the principal facts contained in them, both common and miraculous. And,

Thirdly, Their divine authority.

I will endeavour, therefore, to ſtate ſome of the chief evidences for each of theſe important points, having firſt premiſed three preparatory propoſitions, or lemmas, whereby the evidence for any one of them may be transferred upon the other two.

PROP. I.

THE GENUINENESS OF THE SCRIPTURES PROVE THE TRUTH OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTS CONTAINED IN THEM.

FOR, firſt, It is very rare to meet with any genuine writings of the hiſtorical kind, in which the principal facts are not true; unleſs

where both the motives which engaged the author to falsify, and the circumstances which gave some plausibility to the fiction, are apparent; neither of which can be alleged in the present case with any colour of reason. Where the writer of a history appears to the world as such, not only his moral sense, but his regard to his character and his interest, are strong motives not to falsify in notorious matters; he must therefore have stronger motives from the opposite quarter, and also a favourable conjuncture of circumstances, before he can attempt this.

Secondly, As this is rare in general, so it is much more rare where the writer treats of things that happened in his own time, and under his own cognizance or direction, and communicates his history to persons under the same circumstances. All which may be said of the writers of the scripture history.

That this, and the following arguments, may be applied with more ease and clearness, I will here, in one view, refer the books of the Old and New Testaments to their proper authors. I suppose then, that the Pentateuch consists of the writings of Moses, put together by Samuel, with a very few additions; that the books of Joshua and Judges were in like manner collected by him; and the book of Ruth, with the first part of the book of Samuel, written by him; that the latter part of the first book of Samuel, and the second book, were written by the prophets who succeeded Samuel, suppose Nathan and Gad; that the books of Kings and Chronicles are extracts from the records of the succeeding prophets concerning their own times, and from the public genealogical Tables, made by Ezra; that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are collections of like records, some written by Ezra and Nehemiah, and some by their predecessors; that the book of Esther was written by some eminent Jew, in or near the times of the transaction there recorded, perhaps Mordecai; the book of Job by a Jew of an uncertain time; the Psalms by David, and other pious persons; the books of Proverbs and Canticles by Solomon; the book of Ecclesiastes by Solomon, or perhaps by a Jew of latter times, speaking in his person, but not with an intention to make him pass for the Author; the prophecies by the prophets whose names they bear; and the books of the New Testament by the persons to whom they are usually ascribed. There are many internal evidences, and in the case of the New Testament many external evidences also, by which these books may be shewn to belong to the authors here named. Or, if there be any doubts, they are merely of a critical nature, and do not at all affect the genuineness of the books, nor alter the application of these arguments, or not materially. Thus, if the epistle to the Hebrews be supposed written, not by St. Paul, but by Clement or Barnabas, or any other of their contemporaries, the evidence therein given to the miracles performed by Christ and his followers will not be at all invalidated thereby.

Thirdly, The great importance of the facts mentioned in the scriptures makes it still more improbable, that the several authors should either have attempted to falsify, or have succeeded in such an attempt. This is an argument for the truth of the facts, which proves the genuineness

nuineneſs of the books at the ſame time, as I ſhall ſhew below in a diſtinct propoſition. However, the truth of the facts is inferred more directly from their importance, if the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures be previouſly allowed. The ſame thing may be obſerved of the great number of particular circumſtances of time, place, perſons, &c. mentioned in the ſcriptures, and of the harmony of the books with themſelves, and with each other. Theſe are arguments both for the genuineneſs of the books, and truth of the facts diſtinctly conſidered, and alſo arguments for deducing the truth from the genuineneſs. And indeed the arguments for the general truth of the hiſtory of any age or nation, where regular records have been kept, are ſo interwoven together, and ſupport each other in ſuch a variety of ways, that it is extremely difficult to keep the ideas of them diſtinct, not to anticipate, and not to prove more than the exactneſs of method requires one to prove. Or, in other words, the inconſiſtency of the contrary ſuppoſitions is ſo great, that they can ſcarce ſtand long enough to be confuted. Let any one try this in the hiſtory of France or England, Greece or Rome.

Fourthly, If the books of the Old and New Teſtaments were written by the perſons to whom they were aſcribed above, *i. e.* if they be genuine, the moral characters of theſe writers afford the ſtrongeſt aſſurance, that the facts aſſerted by them are true. Falſhoods and frauds of a common nature ſhock the moral ſenſe of common men, and are rarely met with, except in perſons of abandoned characters: how inconſiſtent then muſt thoſe of the moſt glaring and impious nature be with the higheſt moral characters! That ſuch characters are due to the ſacred writers appears from the writings themſelves by an internal evidence; but there is alſo ſtrong external evidence in many caſes; and indeed this point is allowed in general by unbelievers. The ſufferings which ſeveral of the writers underwent both in life and death, in atteſtation of the facts delivered by them, is a particular argument in favour of theſe.

Fifthly, The arguments here alleged for proving the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory from the genuineneſs of the books are as concluſive in reſpect of the miraculous facts, as of the common ones. But beſides this we may obſerve, that if we allow the genuineneſs of the books to be a ſufficient evidence of the common facts mentioned in them, the miraculous facts muſt be allowed alſo, from their cloſe connexion with the common ones. It is neceſſary to admit both or neither. It is not to be conceived, that Moſes ſhould have delivered the Iſraelites from their ſlavery in Egypt, or conducted them through the wilderneſs for forty years, at all, in ſuch manner as the common hiſtory repreſents, unleſs we ſuppoſe the miraculous facts intermixed with it to be true alſo. In like manner, the fame of Chriſt's miracles, the multitudes which followed him, the adherence of his diſciples, the jealouſy and hatred of the chief prieſts, ſcribes and phariſees, with many other facts of a common nature, are impoſſible to be accounted for, unleſs we allow that he did really work miracles. And the ſame obſervations hold in general of the other parts of the ſcripture hiſtory.

Sixthly, There is even a particular argument in favour of the miraculous part of the ſcripture hiſtory, to be drawn from the reluctance of mankind to receive miraculous facts. It is true, that this reluctance is greater in ſome ages and nations than in others; and probable reaſons may be aſſigned why this reluctance was, in general, leſs in antient times than in the preſent (which, however, are preſumptions that ſome real Miracles were then wrought): but it muſt always be conſiderable from the very frame of the human mind, and would be particular ſo amongſt the Jewe at the time of Chriſt's appearance, as they had then been without miracles for four hundred years, or more. Now this reluctance muſt make both the writers and readers very much upon their guard; and if it be now one of the chief prejudices againſt revealed religion, as unbelievers unanimouſly aſſert, it is but reaſonable to allow alſo, that it would be a ſtrong check upon the publications of a miraculous hiſtory at or near the time when the miracles were ſaid to be performed; *i, e.* it will be a ſtrong confirmation of ſuch an hiſtory, if its genuineneſs be granted previouſly.

And, upon the whole, we may certainly conclude, that the principal facts, both common and miraculous, mentioned in the ſcriptures, muſt be true, if their genuineneſs be allowed. The objection againſt all miraculous facts will be conſidered below, after the other arguments for the truth of the ſcripture miracles have been alleged.

The converſe of this propoſition is alſo true; *i. e.* If the principal facts meutioned in the ſcriptures be true, they muſt be genuine writings. And though this converſe propoſition may, at firſt ſight, appear to be of little importance for the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, inaſmuch as the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures is only made uſe of as a medium whereby to prove the truth of the facts mentioned in them, yet it will be found otherwiſe upon farther examination. For there are many evidences for the truth of particular facts mentioned in the ſcriptures, ſuch, for inſtance, as thoſe taken from natural hiſtory, and the contemporary profane Hiſtory, which no-ways preſuppoſe, but, on the contrary, prove the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures; and this genuineneſs, thus proved, may, by the arguments alleged under this propoſition, be extended to infer the truth of the reſt of the facts. Which is not to argue in a circle, and to prove the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory from its truth; but to prove the truth of thoſe facts, which are not atteſted by natural or civil hiſtory, from thoſe which are, by the medium of the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures.

PROP. II.

THE GENUINENESS OF THE SCRIPTURES PROVES THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THE truth of this propoſition, as it reſpects the book of Daniel, ſeems to have been acknowleged by Prophyry, inaſmuch as he could no-ways invalidate the divine authority of this book, implied by the accompliſhment of the prophecies therein delivered, but by aſſerting that they were written after the event, *i, e.* were forgeries. But the ſame thing holds of many of the other books of the Old and New Teſtament,

taments, many of them having unquestionable evidences of the divine foreknowledge, if they be allowed genuine. I reserve the prophetical evidences to be discussed hereafter, and therefore shall only suggest the following instances here, in order to illustrate the proposition; viz. Moses's prophecy concerning the captivity of the Israelites, of a state not yet erected; Isaiah's concerning Cyrus; Jeremiah's concerning the duration of the Babylonish captivity; Christ's concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity that was to follow; St. John's concerning the great corruption of the Christian church; and Daniel's concerning the fourth empire in its declension; which last was extant in Porphyry's time at least, *i. e.* before the event which it so fitly represents.

The same thing follows from the sublimity and excellence of the doctrines contained in the scriptures. These no-ways suit the supposed authors, *i. e.* the ages when they lived, their educations or occupations; and therefore, if they were the real authors, there is a necessity of admiting the divine assistance,

The converse of this proposition, viz. that the divine authority of the scriptures infers their genuineness, will, I suppose, be readily acknowleged by all. And it may be used for the same purposes as the converse of the last. For there are several evidences for the divine authority of the scriptures, which are direct and immediate, and prior to the consideration both of their genuineness, and of the truth of the facts contained in them. Of this kind is the character of Christ, as it may be collected from his discourses and actions related in the gospels. The great and manifest superiority of this to all other characters, real and fictitious, proves, at once, his divine mission, exclusively of all other considerations. Suppose now the genuineness of St. Luke's Gospel to be deduced in this way, the genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles may be deduced from it, and of St. Paul's Epistles from the Acts, by the usual critical methods. And when the genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles, and of St Paul's Epistles, is thus deduced, the truth of the facts mentioned in them will follow from it by the last proposition; and their divine authority by this.

Prop. III.

The truth of the principal facts contained in the scriptures proves their divine authority.

THIS proposition may be proved two ways; first, exclusively of the evidences of natural religion, such as those delivered in the last chapter; and, secondly, from the previous establishment of the great truths of natural religion. And, first,

It is evident, that the great power, knowlege, and benevolence, which appeared in Christ, the prophets, and apostles, according to the scripture accounts, do, as it were, command assent and submission from all those who receive these accounts as historical truths; and that, though they are not able to deduce, or have not in fact deduced, the evidences of natural religion; nay though they should have many doubts about them; the frame of the human mind is such, that the scripture history, allowed to be true, must convince us, that Christ, the

prophets and apoſtles, were endued with a power greater than human, and acted by the authority of a Being of the higheſt wiſdom and goodneſs.

Secondly, If natural religion be previouſly eſtabliſhed, the truth of the principal facts of the ſcriptures proves their divine authority in an eaſier and more convincing manner.

For, firſt, the power ſhewn in the miracles wrought by Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, the knowlege in their prophecies, and their good moral characters, ſhew them to be, in an eminent manner, the children, ſervants, and meſſengers, of him who is now previouſly acknowleged to be infinite in power, knowlege, and goodneſs.

Secondly, Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, make an expreſs claim to a divine miſſion. Now, it cannot be reconciled to God's moral attributes of juſtice, veracity, mercy, &c. that he ſhould permit theſe perſons to make ſuch a claim falſely, and then endue them, or ſuffer them to be endued, with ſuch credentials as muſt ſupport ſuch a falſe claim. Their claim is not, therefore, a falſe one, if we admit their credentials; or, in other words, the truth of the principal facts mentioned in the ſcriptures proves the divine miſſion of Chriſt, the prophets, and apoſtles, *i. e.* the divine authority of the ſcriptures.

The ſame obſervations may be made upon the converſe of this propoſition, as upon thoſe of the two laſt.

And thus the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures, the truth of the principal facts contained in them, and their divine authority, appear to be ſo connected with each other, that, any one being eſtabliſhed upon independent principles, the other two may be inferred from it. The firſt and ſecond of theſe points are, indeed, more evidently ſubſervient to the laſt, than the laſt is to them; for, if the laſt be allowed, it is at once all that the believer contends for; whereas ſome perſons appear to admit, or not to reject, the firſt, or even the ſecond, and yet are ranked under the title of unbelievers. It is neceſſary to ſhew to ſuch perſons, that the firſt and ſecond infer each other mutually, and both of them the laſt; and it may be of ſome uſe to ſhew, that the laſt infers the two firſt in ſuch a way, as to caſt ſome light upon itſelf, without arguing in a circle; the divine authority of one book being made to infer the genuineneſs of another, or the facts contained in it, *i. e.* its divine authority alſo.

Here it may not be amiſs to ſay ſomething concerning the divine inſpiration of the ſcriptures. Now there are three different ſuppoſitions, which may be made concerning this point.

The firſt and loweſt is, that all the paſſages delivered by Moſes and the prophets, as coming from God, and by the evangeliſts, as the words of Chriſt, alſo the revelation given to St. John in a divine viſion, with all parallel portions of ſcripture, muſt be conſidered as divinely inſpired, and as having immediate divine authority; elſe we cannot allow even common authority to theſe books: but that the common hiſtory, the reaſonings of the apoſtles from the Old Teſtament, and perhaps ſome of their opinions, may be conſidered as coming merely from themſelves, and therefore, though highly to be regarded, are not of unqueſtionable authority. The arguments for this hypotheſis may be, that, ſince the ſcriptures have ſuffered by tranſcribers,

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like other books, a perfect exactness in the original, as to minute particulars (in which alone it has suffered, or could suffer, from transcribers), is needless; that Moses and the prophets, the evangelists and apostles, had natural talents for writing history, applying the scriptures, reasoning, and delivering their opinions; and that God works by natural means, where there are such; that the apostles were ignorant of the true extent of Christ's kingdom for a considerable time after his resurrection, and perhaps mistaken about his second coming; that God might intend, that nothing in this world should be perfect, our blessed Lord excepted; that some historical facts seem difficult to be reconciled to one another, and some applications of passages from the Old Testament by the writers of the New, with their reasonings thereupon, inconclusive and unsatisfactory; that the writers themselves no-where lay claim to infallibility, when speaking from themselves; and that Hermas, Clemens Romanus, and Barnabas, who were apostolical persons, seem evidently to have reasoned in an inconclusive manner.

The second hypothesis is, That historical incidents of small moment, with matters of a nature foreign to religion, may indeed not have divine authority; but that all the rest of the scriptures, the reasonings, the application of the prophecies, and even the doctrines of inferior note, must be inspired, else what can be meant by the gifts of the spirit, particularly that of prophesy, *i. e.* of instructing others? How can Christ's promise of the Comforter, who should lead his disciples into all truth, be fulfilled? Will not the very essentials of religion, the divine mission of Christ, providence, and a future state, be weakened, by thus supposing the sacred writers to be mistaken in religious points? And though the history and the reasonings of the scriptures have the marks of being written in the same manner as other books, *i. e.* may seem not to be inspired, yet a secret influence might conduct the writers in every thing of moment, even when they did not perceive it, or reflect upon it themselves; it being evident from obvious reasonings, as well as from the foregoing theory, that the natural workings of the mind are not to be distinguished from those which a Being that has a sufficient power over our intellectual frame might excite in us.

The third and last hypothesis is, That the whole scriptures are inspired, even the most minute historical passages, the salutations, incidental mention of common affairs, &c. The arguments in favour of this hypothesis are, That many parts of scripture appear to have double, or perhaps manifold senses; That not one jot or tittle of the law (*i. e.* of the whole scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, in an enlarged way of interpretation, which, however, seems justifiable by parallel instances) shall perish; That the Bible, *i. e.* the book of books, as we now have it, appears to have been remarkably distinguished by Providence from all other writings, even of good Jews and Christians, and to admit of a vindication in respect of small difficulties, and small seeming inconsistencies, as well as of great ones, every day more and more as we advance in knowledge; and that effects of the same kind with

divine inſpiration, *viz.* the working of miracles, and the gift of prophecy, ſubſiſting during the times of the authors of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, and even in all, or nearly all, of theſe writers; alſo, that they extended, in ſome caſes, to very minute things.

I will not preſume to determine which of theſe three ſuppoſitions approaches neareſt the truth. The following propoſitions will, I hope, eſtabliſh the firſt of them at leaſt, and prove the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures, the truth of the facts contained in them, and their divine authority, to ſuch a degree, as that we need not fear to make them the rule of our lives, and the ground of our future expectations; which is all that is abſolutely neceſſary for the proof of the Chriſtian religion, and the ſatisfaction and comfort of religious perſons. I even believe, that the following evidences favour the ſecond hypotheſis ſtrongly, and exclude all errors and imperfections of note; nay, I am inclined to believe, that ſerious, inquiſitive men can ſcarce reſt there, but will be led by the ſucceſſive clearing of difficulties, and unfolding of the moſt wonderful truths, to believe the whole ſcriptures to be inſpired, and to abound with numberleſs uſes and applications, of which we yet know nothing. Let future ages determine. The evidently miraculous nature of one part, *viz.* the prophetical, diſpoſes the mind to believe the whole to be far above human invention, or even penetration, till ſuch time as our underſtandings ſhall be farther opened by the events which are to precede the ſecond coming of Chriſt. In the mean while, let critics and learned men of all kinds have full liberty to examine the ſacred books; and let us be ſparing in our cenſures of each other. "Let us judge "nothing before the time, until the Lord come; and then ſhall "every man have praiſe of God." Sobriety of mind, humility, and piety, are requiſite in the purſuit of knowledge of every kind, and much more in that of ſacred. I have here endeavoured to be impartial to each hypotheſis, and juſt to hint what I apprehend each party would or might ſay in defence of their own. However, they are all brethren, and ought not to fall out by the way.

PROP. IV.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM AGE TO AGE, PROVES BOTH THEIR GENUINENESS, AND THE TRUTH OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTS CONTAINED IN THEM.

FOR, firſt, It reſembles the manner in which all other genuine books and true hiſtories have been conveyed down to poſterity. As the writings of the Greek and Roman poets, orators, philoſophers, and hiſtorians, were eſteemed by theſe nations to be tranſmitted to them by their forefathers in a continued ſucceſſion, from the times when the reſpective authors lived; ſo have the books of the Old Teſtament by the Jewiſh Nation, and thoſe of the New by the Chriſtians; and it is an additional evidence in the laſt caſe, that the primitive Chriſtians were not a diſtinct nation, but a great multitude

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of people diſperſed through all the nations of the Roman empire, and even extending itſelf beyond the bounds of that empire. As the Greeks and Romans always believed the principal facts of their hiſtorical books, ſo the Jews and Chriſtians did more, and never ſeem to have doubted of the truth of any part of theirs. In ſhort, whatever can be ſaid of the traditional authority due to the Greek and Roman writers, ſomething analogous to this, and for the moſt part of greater weight, may be urged for the Jewiſh and Chriſtain. Now, I ſuppoſe that all ſober-minded men admit the books uſually aſcribed to the Greek and Roman hiſtorians, philoſophers, *&c.* to be genuine, and the principal facts related or alluded to in them to be true, and that one chief evidence to this is the general traditionary one here recited. They ought therefore to pay the ſame regard to the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, ſince there are the ſame or greater reaſons for it.

Secondly, If we re-conſider the circumſtances recited in the laſt paragraph, it will appear, that theſe traditionary evidences are ſufficient ones; and we ſhall have a real argument, as well as one *ad hominem*, for receiving books ſo handed down to us. For it is not to be conceived, that whole nations ſhould either be impoſed upon themſelves, or concur to deceive others, by forgeries of books or facts. Theſe books and facts muſt therefore, in general, be genuine and true: and it is a ſtrong additional evidence of this, that all nations muſt be jealous of forgeries for the ſame reaſons that we are.

Here it may be objected, that as we reject the prodigies related by the Greek and Roman writers, though we admit the common hiſtory, ſo we ought alſo to reject the ſcripture miracles. To this I anſwer,

Firſt, That the ſcripture hiſtory is ſupported by far ſtronger evidences than the Greek or Roman, as will appear in the following Propoſitions.

Secondly, That many of the ſcripture miracles are related by eye-witneſſes, and were of a public nature, of long duration, attended by great and laſting effects, inſeparably connected with the common hiſtory, and evidently ſuitable to our notions of a wiſe and good Providence, which cannot be ſaid of thoſe related by the Pagan writers.

Thirdly, That the ſcripture miracles not attended by theſe cogent circumſtances are ſupported by their connexion with ſuch as are; and that, after we have admitted theſe, there remains no longer any preſumption againſt thoſe from their miraculous nature.

Fourthly, If there be any ſmall number found amongſt the Pagan miracles, atteſted by ſuch-like evidences as the principal ones for the ſcripture miracles, I do not ſee how they can be rejected; but it will not follow, that the ſcripture miracles are falſe, becauſe ſome of the Pagan ones are true.

PROP. V.

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE HISTORIES, PRECEPTS, PROMISES, THREATENINGS, AND PROPHECIES, CONTAINED IN THE SCRIPTURES, ARE EVIDENCES BOTH OF THEIR GENUINENSS, AND OF THE TRUTH OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTS MENTIONED IN THEM.

THIS is one of the inſtances in which the evidences for the ſcriptures are ſuperior, beyond compariſon, to thoſe for any other antient books. Let us take a ſhort review of this importance in its ſeveral particulars.

The hiſtory of the creation, fall, deluge, longevity of the patriarchs, diſperſion of mankind, calling of Abraham, deſcent of Jacob with his family into Egypt, and the precepts of abſtaining from blood, and of circumciſion, were of ſo much concern, either to mankind in general, or to the Iſraelites in particular, and ſome of them of ſo extraordinary a nature, as that it could not be an indifferent matter to the people amongſt whom the account given of them in Geneſis was firſt publiſhed, whether they received them or not. Suppoſe this account to be firſt publiſhed amongſt the Iſraelites by Moſes, and alſo to be then confirmed by clear, univerſal, uninterrupted tradition (which is poſſible and probable, according to the hiſtory itſelf); and it will be eaſy to conceive, upon this true ſuppoſition, how this account ſhould be handed down from age to age amongſt the Jews, and received by them as indubitabe. Suppoſe this account to be falſe, *i. e.* ſuppoſe that there were no ſuch evidences and veſtiges of theſe hiſtories and precepts, and it will be difficult to conceive how this could have happened, let the time of publication be as it will. If early, the people would reject the account at once for want of a clear tradition, which the account itſelf would give them reaſon to expect. If late, it would be natural to inquire how the author came to be informed of things never known before to others.

If it be ſaid, that he delivered them as communicated to him by revelation (which yet cannot well be ſaid, on account of the many references in Geneſis to the remaining veſtiges of the things related), theſe ſurpriſing, intereſting particulars would at leaſt be an embaraſſment upon his fictitious credentials, and engage his contemporaries to look narrowly into them.

If it be ſaid, that there were many coſmogonies and theogonies current amongſt the Pagans, which yet are evidently fictions; I anſwer, that theſe were in general regarded only as amazing fictions; however, that they had ſome truth in them, either expreſſed in plain words, or concealed in figures, and that their agreement with the book of Geneſis, as far as they are conſiſtent with one another, or have any appearances of truth, is a remarkable evidence in favour of this book. It is endleſs to make all the poſſible ſuppoſitions and objections of this kind; but it appears to me, that the more are made, the more will the truth and genuineneſs of the ſcriptures be eſtabliſhed thereby.

It ought to be added, in relation to the precepts of abſtaining from blood, and circumciſion, before-mentioned, that if the firſt was common to mankind, or was known to have been ſo, the laſt peculiar

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to the deſcendants of Abraham at the time of publication of the book of Geneſis, this confirms it; if otherwiſe, would contribute to make it rejected. If neither the practices themſelves, nor any veſtiges of them, ſubſiſted at all, the book muſt be rejected. The difficulty of deducing theſe practices from the principles of human nature ought to be conſidered here; as it tends to prove their divine original, agreeably to the accounts given of them in Geneſis.

Let us next come to the law of Moſes. This was extremely burdenſome, expenſive, ſevere, particularly upon the crime of Idolatry, to which all mankind were then extravagantly prone; and abſurd, according to the common judgement of mankind, in the inſtances of forbidding to provide themſelves with horſes for war, and commanding all the males of the whole nation to appear at Jeruſalem three times in a year. At the ſame time, it claims a divine authority everywhere, and appeals to facts of the moſt notorious kinds, and to cuſtoms and ceremonies of the moſt peculiar nature, as the memorials of theſe facts. We cannot conceive, then, that any nation, with ſuch motives to reject, and ſuch opportunities of deteſting, the forgery of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, ſhould yet receive them, and ſubmit to his heavy yoke. That they ſhould often throw it off in part, and for a time, and rebel againſt the divine authority of their law, though ſufficiently evidenced, is eaſily to be accounted for from what we ſee and feel in ourſelves and others every day; but that they ſhould ever return and repent, ever ſubmit to it, unleſs it had divine authority, is utterly incredible. It was not a matter of ſuch ſmall importance, as that they could content themſelves with a ſuperficial examination, with a leſs examination than would be ſufficient to detect ſo notorious a forgery; and this holds, at whatever time we ſuppoſe theſe books to be publiſhed.

That the Jews did thus ſubmit to the law of Moſes, is evident from the books of the Old and New Teſtaments. If we allow them the leaſt truth and genuineneſs, or even from profane writers; nay, I may ſay, from the preſent obſervance of it by the Jews ſcattered through all the kingdoms of the World.

If it be ſaid, that other nations have aſcribed divine authority to their lawgivers, and ſubmitted to very ſevere laws; I anſwer, firſt, That the pretences of lawgivers amongſt the Pagans to inſpiration, and the ſubmiſſion of people to them, may be accounted for in the degree in which they are found, from the then circumſtances of things, without having recourſe to real inſpiration: and particularly, that if we admit the patriarchal revelations related and intimated by Moſes, and his own divine legation, it will appear, that the heathen lawgivers copied after theſe; which is a ſtrong argument for admitting them. Secondly, That there is no inſtance, amongſt the Pagans, of a body of laws being produced at once, and remaining without addition afterwards; but that they were compiled by degrees according to the exigencies of the ſtate, the prevelance of a particular faction, or the authority of ſome particular perſons, who were all ſtyled lawgivers, as Draco and Solon at Athens: That they were made, in general,

general, not to curb, but humour, the genius of the people; and were afterwards repealed and altered from the ſame cauſes: whereas the body politic of the Iſraelites took upon itſelf a complete form at once, and has preſerved this form in great meaſure to the preſent time, and that under the higheſt external diſadvantages; which is an inſtance quite without parallel, and ſhews the great opinion which they had of their law, *i. e.* its great importance to them.

If it be ſaid, that the laws of the Iſraelites were not perhaps impoſed at once, but grew up by degrees, as in other nations; this will make the difficulty of receiving the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, in which the contrary, with all the particular circumſtances, is aſſerted, greater than ever. In ſhort, of all the fictions or forgeries that can happen amongſt any people, the moſt improbable is that of their body of civil laws; and it ſeems to be utterly impoſſible in the caſe of the law of Moſes.

The next part of the ſcriptures, whoſe importance we are to conſider, is the hiſtory contained in the books of Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and extending from the death of Moſes to the re-eſtabliſhment of the Jews after the Babyloniſh captivity, by Ezra and Nehemiah. Now, in this hiſtory, are the following important facts, moſt of which muſt be ſuppoſed to leave ſuch veſtiges of themſelves, either external viſible ones, or internal in the minds and memories of the people, as would verify them, if true; make them be rejected, if falſe. The conqueſt of the land of Canaan, the diviſion of it, and the appointment of cities for the Prieſts and Levites by Joſhua; the frequent ſlaveries of the Iſraelites to the neighbouring kings, and their deliverance by the judges; the erection of a kingdom by Samuel; the tranſlation of this kingdom from Saul's family to David, with his conqueſts; the glory of Solomon's kingdom; the building of the temple; the diviſion of the kingdom; the idolatrous worſhip ſet up at Dan and Bethel; the captivity of the Iſraelites by the kings of Aſſyria; the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar; the deſtruction of the temple; their return under Cyrus, rebuilding the temple under Darius Hyſtaſpis, and re-eſtabliſhment under Artaxerxes Longimanus, by Ezra and Nahemiah; theſe events are ſome of them the moſt glorious, ſome of them the moſt ſhameful, that can well happen to any people. How can we reconcile forgeries of ſuch oppoſite kinds, and eſpecially as they are interwoven together? But, indeed, the facts are of ſuch conſequence, notoriety, and permanency in their effects, that neither could any particular perſons amongſt the Iſraelites firſt project the deſign of feigning them, nor their own people concur with ſuch a deſign, nor the neighbouring nations permit the fiction to paſs. Nothing could make a jealous multitude amongſt the Iſraelites or neighbouring nations acquieſce, but the invincible evidence of the facts here alledged. And the ſame obſervations hold of numberleſs other facts of leſſer note, which it would be tedious to recount; and of miraculous facts as much, or rather more than others. Beſides which, it is to be noted, that all theſe have ſuch various neceſſary connexions

connexions with each other, that they cannot be ſeparated, as has been already remarked.

And all this will, I preſume, be readily acknowleged, upon ſuppoſition that the ſeveral books were publiſhed in or near the times of the facts therein recorded. But, ſay the objectors, this will not hold in ſo ſtrong a manner, if the books be publiſhed after theſe times. Let us take an extreme caſe then, and ſuppoſe all theſe hiſtorical books forged by Ezra. But this is evidently impoſſible. Things of ſo important and notorious a kind, ſo glorious and ſo ſhameful to the people for whoſe ſake they were forged, would have been rejected with the utmoſt indignation, unleſs there were the ſtrongeſt and moſt genuine foot-ſteps of the things already amongſt the people. They were therefore in part true. But many additions were made by Ezra, ſay the objectors. I anſwer, if theſe were of importance, the difficulty returns. If not, then all the important facts are true. Beſides, what motive could any one have for making additions of no importance? Again, if there were any antient writers extant, Ezra muſt either copy after them, which deſtroys the preſent ſuppoſition; or differ from and oppoſe them, which would betray him. If there were no ſuch antient writings, the people could not but inquire, in matters of importance, for what reaſons Ezra was ſo particular in things of which there was neither any memory, nor account in writing. If it be ſaid, that the people did not regard what Ezra had thus forged, but let it paſs uncontradicted; this is again to make the things of ſmall or no importance. Beſides, why ſhould Ezra write, if no one would read or regard? Farther, Ezra muſt, like all other men, have friends, enemies, and rivals; and ſome or all of theſe would have been a check upon him, and a ſecurity againſt him in matters of importance.

If, inſtead of ſuppoſing Ezra to have forged all theſe books at once, we ſuppoſe them forged ſucceſſively, one, two, or three centuries after the facts related; we ſhall, from this intermediate ſuppoſition, have (beſides the difficulty of accounting for ſuch a regular ſucceſſion of impoſtures in matters ſo important) a mixture of the difficulties recited in the two preceding paragraphs, the ſum total of which will be the ſame, or nearly the ſame, as in either of thoſe caſes. And, upon the whole, the forgery of the annals of the Iſraelites appears to be impoſſible, as well as that of the body of their civil laws.

If it be ſaid, that the hiſtories and annals of other nations have many fictions and falſhoods in them; I anſwer, that the ſuperior importance of the events which happened to the Jewiſh nation, and the miraculous nature of many of them, occaſioned their being recorded at the then preſent times, in the way of ſimple narration, the command of God alſo concurring, as it ſeems; and that thus all addition, variety, and embelliſhment, was prevented, whereas the hiſtories of the originals of other nations were not committed to writing till long after the events, after they had been corrupted and obſcured by numberleſs fables and fictions, as is well known. There are many other circumſtances peculiar to the Jewiſh hiſtory, which eſtabliſh its truth even in the minuteſt things, as I ſhall ſhew in the following propoſitions;

tions; and I hope the reader will see, in the progress of the argument, that the same method of reasoning which proves the Jewish history to be rigorously exact proves also, that the histories of other nations may be expected to be partly true, and partly false, as they are agreed to be by all learned and sober-minded men.

I pass over the books of Esther, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, as not having much relation to this proposition; and proceed to the consideration of the prophecies.

These contain the most important precepts, promises, threatenings, and predictions, *i. e.* prophecies peculiarly so called, besides the indirect and incidental mention of the great events recorded in the historical books. And as they are full of the severest reproofs and denunciations against all ranks, king, governors and great men subordinate to him, priests, prophets, and people, one cannot expect, that they should be favourably received by any, but those of the best moral characters; and these must be the first to detect and expose a forgery, if there was any. So that the prophecies, if they were forgeries, could not be able to stand so rigorous an examination as the importance of the case would prompt all ranks to. And here all the arguments before used to shew, that the historical books could neither be forged at the time of the facts, nor so late as Ezra's time, nor in any intermediate one, are applicable with the same, or even greater force. Besides which, it is to be observed of the predictions in particular, that, if they were published before the events, they could not be forgeries; if afterwards, there would not be wanting amongst the Jews many persons of the same disposition with Porphyry, and the present objectors to the genuineness of the prophecies, and the truth of the facts related or implied in them, who upon that supposition would have met with success, as Porphyry and the antient objectors would have done long ago, had their objections been solid. Infidelity is the natural and necessary product of human wickedness and weakness; we see it, in all other things, as well as in religion, whensoever the interests and passions of men are opposite to truth; and the present objectors to the truth of revealed religion may be assured, that the antient ones, the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness, the rebellious Jews before Christ, and both Jews and Gentiles since Christ, have done justice to their cause.

We come, in the last place, to consider the importance of the books of the New Testament. Whoever then received these in antient times as genuine and true, must not only forsake all sinful pleasures, and expose himself to various hardships and dangers, and even to death itself. They had indeed a future glory promised to them, with which the sufferings of the present time were not worthy to be compared. But then this glory, being future, must be supported with the most inconteſtable evidences; else it could have no power against the opposite motives; and both together must so rouse the mind, as to make men exert themselves to the uttermost, till they had received full satisfaction. Besides which, it is to be observed, that even joy, and the greatness of an expectation, incline men to disbelieve, and to examine with a scrupulous exactness, as well as fear and dislike.

As to those who did not receive the doctrines of the New Testament, and the facts there related and implied, they would have sufficient motives to detect the forgery or falshood, had there been any such. They were all condemned for their unbelief; many for their gross vices; the Jew for his darling partiality to his own nation and ceremonial law; and the Gentile for his idolatry and polytheism; and the most dreadful punishments threatened to all in a future state. Now these were important charges and alarming considerations, which, if they did not put men upon a fair examination, would, at least, make them desirous to find fault, to detect and expose, and, if they had discovered any fraud, to publish it with the utmost triumph. The books of the New Testament could not but be of so much importance to the unbelievers of the primitive times, as to excite them to vigilance and earnestness, in endeavouring to discredit and destroy them. All which is abundantly confirmed by the history of those times. And indeed cases of the same kind, though not of the same degree, occur now to daily observation, which the reader will do well to call to mind. Thus it comes to pass, on one hand, that frauds and impostures are crushed in the birth; and, on the other, that wicked men labour against the truth in the most unreasonable and inconsistent ways, and are led on from one degree of obstinacy, prevarication, and infatuation, to another, without limits.

It may be added here, that the persons reproved and condemned in the Gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles, by St. Paul in his Epistles, by St. Peter in his second Epistle, by St. John and St. Jude in their Epistles, and by St. John in the Revelation, *viz.* the five churches, and the Nicolaitans, could not but endeavour to vindicate themselves. The books were all of a public nature, and these reproofs particularly so, as being intended to guard others.

I have now gone through the several parts of the scripture, and shewn briefly how the importance of each would be a security against forgery and fiction in that part. I will now add some general evidences to the same purpose.

First, then, it is certain, that both Jews and Christians have undergone the severest persecutions and sufferings on account of their sacred books, and yet never could be prevailed with to deliver them up: which shews that they thought them of the highest importance, most genuine and true.

Secondly, The preservation of the law of Moses, which is probably the first book that ever was written in any language, while so many others more modern have been lost, shews the great regard paid to it. The same holds in a less degree of most of the other books of the Old Testament, since most of them are antienter than the oldest Greek historians. And as the records of the neighbouring nations are lost; we must suppose those of the Jews to have been preserved, from their importance, or some other such cause as may be an equal evidence of their genuineness and truth.

Thirdly, The great importance of all the sacred books appears from the many early translations and paraphrases of them. The same translations and paraphrases must be an effectual means of

securing

means of ſecuring their integrity and purity, if we could ſuppoſe any deſign to corrupt them.

Fourthly, The heſitation and difficulty with which a few books of the New Teſtament were received into the canon, ſhew the great concern of the primitive Chriſtians about their canon, *i. e.* the high importance of the books received into it; and are therefore a ſtrong evidence, firſt, for the genuineneſs and truth of the books which were received without heſitation; and then for theſe others, ſince they were received univerſally at laſt.

Fifthly, The great religious hatred and animoſity which ſubſiſted between the Jews and Samaritans, and between ſeveral of the antient ſects amongſt the Chriſtians, ſhew of what importance they all thought their ſacred books; and would make them watch over one another with a jealous eye.

PROP. 7.

THE LANGUAGE, STYLE, AND MANNER OF WRITING, USED IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, ARE ARGUMENTS OF THEIR GENUINENESS.

HERE I obſerve, firſt, That the Hebrew language, in which the Old Teſtament was written, being the language of an antient people, and one that had little intercourſe with their neighbours, and whoſe neighbours alſo ſpake a language that had great affinity with their own, would not change ſo faſt as modern languages have done, ſince nations have been variouſly mixed with one another, and trade, arts, and ſciences, greatly extended. Yet ſome changes there muſt be, in paſſing from the time of Moſes to that of Malachi. Now, I apprehend, that the Biblical Hebrew correſponds to this criterion with ſo much exactneſs, that a conſiderable argument may be deduced thence in favour of the genuineneſs of the books of the Old Teſtament.

Secondly, The books of the Old Teſtament have too conſiderable a diverſity of ſtyle to be the work either of one Jew (for a Jew he muſt be, on account of the language), or of any ſet of contemporary Jews. If therefore they be all forgeries, there muſt be a ſucceſſion of impoſtors in different ages, who have concurred to impoſe upon poſterity, which is inconceiveable. To ſuppoſe part forged, and part genuine, is very harſh; neither would this ſuppoſition, if admitted, be ſatisfactory.

Thirdly, The Hebrew language ceaſed to be ſpoken, as a living language, ſoon after the time of the Babyloniſh captivity: but it would be difficult or impoſſible to forge any thing in it, after it was become a dead language. For there was no grammar made for the Hebrew till many ages after; and, as it is difficult to write in a dead language with exactneſs even by the help of a grammar, ſo it ſeems impoſſible without it. All the books of the Old Teſtament muſt therefore be, nearly, as antient as the Babyloniſh captivity; and, ſince they could not all be written in the ſame age, ſome muſt be conſiderably

siderably more antient; which would bring us again to a succession of conspiring impostors.

Fourthly, This last remark may perhaps afford a new argument for the genuineness of the book of Daniel, if any were wanting. But indeed the Septuagint translation shews both this, and all the other books of the Old Testament, to have been considered as antient books, soon after the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, at least.

Fifthly, There is a simplicity of style, and an unaffected manner of writing, in all the books of the Old Testament; which is a very strong evidence of their genuineness, even exclusively of the suitableness of the circumstance to the times of the supposed authors.

Sixthly, The style of the New Testament is also simple and unaffected, and perfectly suited to the time, places, and persons. Let it be observed farther, that the use of words and phrases is such, also the ideas, and method of reasoning, as that the books of the New Testament could be written by none but persons originally Jews, which would bring the inquiry into a little narrower compass, if there was any occasion for this.

One may also observe, that the narrations and precepts of both Old and New Testament are delivered without hesitation; the writers teach as having authority; which circumstance is peculiar to those who have both a clear knowledge of what they deliver, and a perfect integrity of heart.

PROP. VIII.

THE VERY GREAT NUMBER OF PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF TIME, PLACE, PERSONS, &c. MENTIONED IN THE SCRIPTURES, ARE ARGUMENTS BOTH OF THEIR GENUINENESS AND TRUTH.

THAT the reader may understand what I mean by these particular circumstances, I will recite some of the principal heads, under which they may be classed.

There are then mentioned, in the book of Genesis, the rivers of Paradise, the generations of the antediluvian patriarchs, the deluge with its circumstances, the place where the ark rested, the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, the dispersion of mankind, or the division of the earth amongst the posterity of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, the generations of the postdiluvian patriarchs, with the gradual shortening of human life after the flood, the sojournings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with many particulars of the state of Canaan, and the neighbouring countries, in their times, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the state of the land of Edom, both before and after Esau's time, and the descent of Jacob into Egypt, with the state of Egypt before Moses's time.

In the book of Exodus are the plagues of Egypt, the institution of the passover, the passage through the Red Sea, with the destruction of Pharoah and his host there, the miracle of manna, the victory over the Amalekites, the solemn delivery of the law from mount Sinai, many particular laws both moral and ceremonial, the worship of the golden calf, and a very minute description of the tabernacle, priests garments, ark, &c.

In Leviticus we have a collection of ceremonial laws, with all their particularities, and an account of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu.

The book of Numbers contains the first and second numberings of the several tribes, with their genealogies, the peculiar offices of the three several families of the Levites, many ceremonial laws, the journeyings and encampments of the people in the wilderness during forty years; with the relation of some remarkable events which happened in this period, as the searching of the land, the rebellion of Korah, the victories over Arad, Sihon, and Og, with the division of the kingdoms of the two last among the Gadites, Reubenites, and Manassites, the history of Balak and Balaam, and the victory over the Midianites, all described with the several particularities of time, place, and persons.

The book of Deuteronomy contains a recapitulation of many things contained in the three last books, with a second delivery of the law, chiefly the moral one, by Moses upon the borders of Canaan, just before his death, with an account of this.

In the book of Joshua, we have the passage over Jordan, the conquest of the land of Canaan in detail, and the division of it among the tribes, including a minute geographical description.

The book of Judges recites a great variety of public transactions, with the private origin of some. In all, the names of times, places, and persons, both among the Israelites, and the neighbouring nations, are noted with particularity and simplicity.

In the book of Ruth is a very particular account of the genealogy of David, with several incidental circumstances.

The books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, contain the transactions of the kings before the captivity, and governors afterwards, all delivered in the same circumstantial manner. And here the particular account of the regulations sacred and civil established by David, and of the building of the temple by Solomon, the genealogies given in the beginning of the first book of Chronicles, and the lists of the persons who returned, sealed, &c. after the captivity, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, deserve especial notice, in the light in which we are now considering things.

The book of Esther contains a like account of a very remarkable event, with the institution of a festival in memory of it.

The book of Psalms mentions many historical facts in an incidental way; and this, with the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, allude to the manners and customs of antient times in various ways.

In the Prophecies there are some historical relations; and in other parts the indirect mention of facts, times, places, and persons, is interwoven with the predictions in the most copious and circumstantial manner.

If we come to the New Testament, the same observations present themselves at first view. We have the names of friends and enemies, Jews, Greeks, and Romans, obscure and illustrious, the times, places, and circumstances of facts, specified directly, and alluded to indirectly.

indirectly, with various references to the cuſtoms and manners of thoſe times.

Now here I obſerve, firſt, that, in fact, we do not ever find, that forged or falſe accounts of things ſuperabound thus in particularities. There is always ſome truth where there are conſiderable particularities related, and they always ſeem to bear ſome proportion to one another. Thus there is a great want of the particulars of time, place, and perſons, in Manetho's account of the Egyptian dynaſties, Cteſias's of the Aſſyrian kings, and thoſe which the technical chronologers have given of the antient kingdoms of Greece; and, agreeably thereto, theſe accounts have much fiction and falſhood, with ſome truth: whereas Thucydides's hiſtory of the Peloponneſian war, and Cæſar's of the war in Gaul, in both which the particulars of time, place, and perſons, are mentioned, are univerſally eſteemed true to a great degree of exactneſs.

Secondly, a forger, or a relater of falſhoods, would be careful not to mention ſo great a number of particulars, ſince this would be to put into his reader's hands criterions whereby to detect him. Thus we may ſee one reaſon of the fact mentioned in the laſt paragraph, and which in confirming that fact confirms the propoſition here to be proved.

Thirdly, a forger, or a relater of falſhoods, could ſcarce furniſh out ſuch liſts of particulars. It is eaſy to conceive how faithful records kept from time to time by perſons concerned in the tranſactions ſhould contain ſuch liſts; nay, it is natural to expect them in this caſe, from that local memory which takes ſtrong poſſeſſion of the fancy in thoſe who have been preſent at tranſactions; but it would be a work of the higheſt invention, and greateſt ſtretch of genius, to raiſe from nothing ſuch numberleſs particularities, as are almoſt every-where to be met with in the ſcriptures. The account given of memory, imagination, and invention, in the foregoing part of theſe obſervations, ſets this matter in a ſtrong light.

There is a circumſtance relating to the Goſpels, which deſerves particular notice in this place. St. Matthew and John were apoſtles; and therefore, ſince they accompanied Chriſt, muſt have this local memory of his journeyings and miracles. St. Mark was a Jew of Judæa, and a friend of St. Peter's; and therefore may either have had this local memory himſelf, or have written chiefly from St. Peter, who had. But St. Luke, being a proſelyte of Antioch, not converted perhaps till ſeveral years after Chriſt's reſurrection, and receiving his accounts from different eye-witneſſes, as he ſays himſelf, could have no regard to that order of time, which a local memory would ſuggeſt. Let us ſee how the Goſpels anſwer to theſe poſitions. St. Matthew's then appears to be in exact order of time, and to be a regulator to St. Mark's and St. Luke's, ſhewing St. Mark's to be nearly ſo, but St. Luke's to have little or no regard to the order of time in his account of Chriſt's miniſtry. St. John's Goſpel is, like St. Matthew's, in order of time; but as he wrote after all the reſt, and with a view only of recording ſome remarkable particulars, ſuch as Chriſt's ac-

tions before he left Judæa to go to preach in Galilee, his disputes with the Jews of Jerusalem, and his discourses to the apostles at his last supper, there was less opportunity for his local memory to shew itself. However, his recording what passed before Christ's going into Galilee might be in part from this cause, as St. Matthew's omission of it was probably from his want of this local memory. For it appears, that St. Matthew resided in Galilee; and that he was not converted till some time after Christ's coming thither to preach. Now this suitableness of the four Gospels to their reputed authors, in a circumstance of so subtle and recluse a nature, is quite inconsistent with the supposition of fiction or forgery. This remark is chiefly taken from Sir Isaac Newton's chapter concerning the times of the birth and passion of Christ, in his comment on Daniel.

Fourthly, if we could suppose the persons, who forged the books of the Old and New Testaments, to have furnished their readers with the great variety of particulars above-mentioned, notwithstanding the two reasons here alleged against it, we cannot, however, conceive, but that the persons of those times when the books were published must, by the help of these criterions, have detected and exposed the forgeries or falsehoods. For these criterions are so attested by allowed facts, as at this time, and in this remote corner of the world, to establish the truth and genuineness of the scriptures, as may appear even from this chapter, and much more from the writings of commentators, sacred critics, and such other learned men as have given the historical evidences for revealed religion in detail; and by parity of reason they would suffice even now to detect the fraud, were there any: whence we may conclude, *à fortiori*, that they must have enabled the persons who were upon the spot, when the books were published, to do this; and the importance of many of these particulars, considered under Prop. 6, would furnish them with abundant motives for this purpose. And upon the whole I infer, that the very great number of particulars of time, place, persons, &c. mentioned in the scriptures, is a proof of their genuineness and truth, even previously to the consideration of the agreement of these particulars with history, natural and civil, and with one another, of which I now proceed to treat.

PROP. IX.

THE AGREEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES WITH HISTORY, NATURAL AND CIVIL, IS A PROOF OF THEIR GENUINENESS AND TRUTH.

THUS the history of the fall agrees in an eminent manner both with the obvious facts of labour, sorrow, pain, and death, with what we see and feel every day, and with all our philosophical inquiries into the frame of the human mind, the nature of social life, and the origin of evil, as may appear from these papers amongst other writings of the same kind. The several powers of the little world within a man's own breast are at variance with one another as well as those of the great world; we are utterly unable to give a complete

plete ſolution of the origin of the evils which flow from theſe diſcords, and from the jarring of the elements of the natural world; and yet there are comfortable hopes, that all evil will be overpowered and annihilated ot laſt, and that it has an entire ſubſerviency to good really and ultimately, *i.e.* though the "ſerpent bruiſe our heel," yet we ſhall "bruiſe its head."

It cannot be denied indeed, but that both the hiſtory of the creation, and that of the fall, are attended with great difficulties. But then they are not of ſuch a kind as intimate them to be a fiction contrived by Moſes. It is probable, that he ſet down the traditional account, ſuch as he received it from his anceſtors; and that this account contains the literal truth in ſhort, though ſo concealed in certain particulars through its ſhortneſs, and ſome figurative expreſſions made uſe of, that we cannot yet, perhaps never ſhall, interpret it ſatisfactorily. However, Mr. Whiſton's conjectures concerning the ſix days creation ſeem to deſerve the attention of future inquiries; and there is great plauſibility in ſuppoſing with him, that the firſt chapter of Geneſis contains a narrative of the ſucceſſion of viſible appearances.

One may ſuppoſe alſo, that there is a typical and prophetic ſenſe to be diſcovered hearafter, relative perhaps to the ſix millenniums, which are to preceede a ſeventh ſabbatical one; and that the words are more accommodated to this ſenſe than to the literal one, in ſome places, which I think holds in many of the prophecies that have double ſenſes. However, there is no appearance of any motive to a fraud, either in the hiſtory of the creation or fall, nor any mark of one. And the ſame ſhortneſs and obſcurity which prevents our being able to explain, ſeems alſo to preclude objections. If we ſuppoſe theſe hiſtories to have been delivered by traditional explanations that accompanied hieroglyphical delineations, this would perhaps account for ſome of the difficulties; and help us to conceive how the hiſtories may be exact, and even decypherable hearafter. The appellations of the tree of life, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the ſerpent, ſeem to favour this ſuppoſition. At the utmoſt, one can make no objections againſt theſe hiſtories, but what are conſiſtent with the firſt and loweſt of the ſuppoſitions above mentioned concerning divine inſpiration.

Natural hiſtory bears a ſtrong teſtimony to Moſes's account of the deluge; and ſhews that it muſt have been univerſal, or nearly ſo, however difficult it may be to us, either to find ſources for ſo great a body of waters, or methods of removing them. That a comet had ſome ſhare in this event, ſeems highly probable from what Dr. Halley and Mr. Whiſton have obſerved of this matter: I gueſs alſo partly from the ſuppoſition, that ſome part of the tail of a comet was then attracted by the earth, and depoſited there, partly from the great ſhortening of human life after the flood, and partly from the fermenting and inebriating after the flood, that a great change was made at the time of the flood in the conſtitution of natural bodies, and particularly in that of water. And it ſeems not improbable to me, that an enlargement of the reſpective ſpheres of attraction and

repulſion, and of the force of theſe, in the ſmall particles of water, might greatly contribute to account for ſome circumſtances of the deluge, mentioned by Moſes. For, by the increaſe of the ſphere, and force of attraction, the waters ſuſpended in the air or firmament in the form of a miſt of vapour before the flood (ſee Gen. ii. 5. 6.) might be collected into large drops, and fall upon the earth. And their fall might give occaſion to rarer watery vapours, floating at great diſtances from the earth in the planetary and intermundane ſpaces, to approach it, be in like manner condenſed into large drops, and fall upon it. This might continue for 40 days, the force with which the rare vapours approached the earth decreaſing all the latter part of that time, and being at the end of it overpowered by the contrary force of the vapours raiſed from the earth, now covered with water, by the action of the ſun, and of the wind, mentioned Gen. viii. 1. For it is evident, that the wind has great power in raiſing watery particles, *i. e.* putting them into a ſtate of repulſion; and the wind here conſidered would be far ſtronger than that which now prevails in the Pacific Ocean, ſince the whole globe was one great ocean during the height of the deluge. The ceſſation of the rain, and the increaſe of the ſphere, and force of repulſion, above ſuppoſed, would in like manner favour the aſcent of vapours from this great ocean. And thus the precedent vapours might be driven by the ſubſequent ones into the planetary and intermundane ſpaces, beyond the earth's attraction. However, ſince the quantity of the ſubſequent vapours muſt perpetually decreaſe by the decreaſe of the ſurface of the ocean, a limit would be ſet to the aſcent of the vapours, as was before to their deſcent.

According to this hypotheſis, the ſtate of the waters, which was ſuperinduced at the deluge, may both be the cauſe of the rainbow, i. e. of drops of a proper ſize for this purpoſe, and exempt us from the danger of a ſecond deluge. For a freſh intermixture of like cometical particles could not now ſuperinduce a new ſtate. The rainbow may therefore be a natural ſign and evidence, "that the waters "ſhall no more become a flood to deſtroy the earth."

As to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep, mentioned Gen. vii. 11. though no ſatisfactory account has been given of this hitherto, yet ſurely there is great plauſibility in ſuppoſing, that the increaſed attraction of a comet, conſequent upon its near approach to the earth, might have ſome ſuch effect, and at the ſame time contribute to produce ſuch changes in the earth, as a mere deluge could not.

Civil hiſtory affords likewiſe many evidences, which ſupport the Moſaic account of the deluge. Thus, firſt, we find from Pagan authors, that the tradition of a flood was general, or even univerſal. Secondly, the paucity of mankind, and the vaſt tracts of uninhabited land, which are mentioned in the accounts of the firſt ages, ſhew that mankind are lately ſprung from a ſmall ſtock, and even ſuit the time aſſigned by Moſes for the flood. Thirdly, the great number of ſmall kingdoms, and petty ſtates, in the firſt ages, and the late riſe of the great empires of Egypt, Aſſyria, Babylon, &c. con-

concur to the same purpose. Fourthly, the invention and progress of arts and sciences concur likewise. And this last favours the Mosaic history of the antidiluvians. For as he mentions little of their arts, so it appears, from the late invention of them after the flood, that those who were preserved from it were possessed of few.

It has been objected to the Mosaic history of the deluge, That the ark could not contain all the animals which are now found upon the earth, with the proper provisions for them during the time of their deluge. But this, upon an accurate computation, has been proved to be otherwise; so that what was thought an objection is even some evidence. For it is extremely improbable, that a person who had feigned the particular of the ark, should have come so near the proper dimensions. It is to be considered here, that the several species of both plants and brute animals, which differ from each other by small degrees, seem to be multiplied every day by the varieties of climates, culture, diet, mixture, &c. also, that if we suppose an universal deluge, the ark, with the entrance of the animals, &c. seem necessary also. For as we can trace up the first imperfect rudiments of the art of shipping amongst the Greeks, there could be no shipping before the flood; consequently no animals could be saved. Nay, it is highly improbable, that even men, and domestic animals, could be saved, not to mention wild beasts, serpents, &c. though we should suppose that the Antidiluvians had shipping, unless we suppose also they had a divine intimation and directions about it, such as Moses relates; which would be to give up the cause of infidelity at once.

It has been objected likewise, That the Negro nations differ so much from the Europeans, that they do not seem to have descended from the same ancestors. But this objection has no solid foundation. We cannot presume to say what alterations climate, air, water, soil, customs, &c. can or cannot produce. It is no-ways to be imagined, that all the national differences in complexion, features, make of the bones, &c. require so many different originals; on the contrary, we have reason from experience to assert, that various changes of this kind are made by the incidents of life, just as was observed in the last paragraph of plants and brute animals. And, with respect to the different complexions of different nations, Dr. Mitchell has shewn with great appearance of truth, Phil. Trans. N° 474, that these arise from external influences. It will confirm this, if it be found, that the Jews, by residing in any country for some generations, approach to the complexion of the original natives. At the same time we must observe from the history of distempers, that acquired dispositions may be transmitted to the descendants for some generations; which is perhaps one of the great truths intimated in the account of the fall. And thus the children of Negroes may be black, though born and bred up in a country where the original natives are not so.

A third objection is, That it is difficult to account for the original of the Americans, and for the wild beasts and serpents that are found in that quarter of the world, according to the Mosaic history. But to this one may answer, first, that America may be

now contiguous to the North-eaſt part of Aſia. Secondly, that it might have been contiguous to other parts of our great continent for ſome centuries after the deluge, though that contiguity be ſince broken off. Thirdly, that the firſt ſailors, who ventured out of the Streights, or others, might be driven by ſtreſs of weather and their own ignorance, firſt within the influence of the trade-winds, and then to ſome part of America. One can offer nothing certain on either ſide, in reſpect of theſe points. However, it ſeems to me, that many cuſtoms found amongſt the Negroes and Americans are ſtronger evidences, that they are of the ſame original with the Aſiatics and Europeans, than any which have yet appeared to the contrary. And, upon the whole, I conclude certainly, that the Moſaic account of the deluge is much confirmed by both natural and civil hiſtory, if we embrace the firſt and loweſt hypotheſis concerning divine inſpiration; and has very ſtrong preſumptions for it, according to the ſecond or third.

If we could ſuppoſe the high mountains in South America not to have been immerged in the deluge, we might the more eaſily account for the wild beaſts, poiſonous ſerpents, and curious birds of America. Might not the ark be driven round the globe during the deluge? And might not Noah be aware of this, and obſerve that it had been immerged fifteen cubits in water? And may not the Moſaic account be partly a narrative of what Noah ſaw, partly the concluſions which he muſt naturally draw from thence? Thus the tops of ſome of the higheſt mountains might eſcape, conſiſtently with the Moſaic account. The future inquiries of natural hiſtorians may perhaps determine this point.

The next great event recorded in Geneſis is the confuſion of languages. Now the Moſaic account of this appears highly probable, if we firſt allow that of the deluge. For it ſeems impoſſible to explain how the known language ſhould ariſe from one ſtock. Let any one try only in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Engliſh. The changes which have happened in languages ſince hiſtory has been certain, do not at all correſpond to a ſuppoſition of this kind. There is too much method and art in the Greek and Latin tongues for them to have been the inventions of a rude and barbarous people; and they differ too much from Hebrew, Arabic, &c. to have flowed from them without deſign. As to the Chineſe, it is difficult to make any probable conjectures about it, partly from its great heterogeneity in in reſpect of other languages; partly becauſe learned men have not yet examined it accurately. However, the moſt probable conjecture ſeems to be, that it is the language of Noah's poſtdiluvian poſterity; the leaſt probable one, that it could have flowed naturally from any known language, or from the ſame ſtock with any; which it muſt have done, if we admit the deluge, and yet reject the confuſion of languages.

The diſperſion of the three ſons of Noah into different countries, related in the tenth chapter of Geneſis, comes next under conſideration, being a conſequence, not the cauſe, of the diverſity of languages.

Now

Now here antiquaries and learned men ſeem to be fully agreed, that the Moſaic account is confirmed, as much as can be expected in our preſent ignorance of the ſtate of antient nations. And it is to be obſerved of all the articles treated of under this propoſition, that we, who live in the North-weſt corner of Europe, lie under great diſadvantages in ſuch reſearches. However, ſince thoſe who have ſtudied the Oriental languages and hiſtories, or have travelled into the Eaſtern parts, have made many diſcoveries of late years, which have ſurpriſingly confirmed the Scripture accounts, one may hope and preſume, that if either our learned men be hereafter ſuffered to have free acceſs to thoſe parts, or the natives themſelve become learned, both which are ſurely probable in the higheſt degree, numberleſs unexpected evidences for the truth of the Scripture hiſtory will be brought to light.

Let us next come to the ſtate of religion in the antient poſtdiluvian world, according to Moſes and the ſucceeding ſacred hiſtorians. The poſtdiluvian patriarchs then appear to have worſhiped the one Supreme Being by ſacrifices, but in a ſimple manner, and to have had frequent divine communications. By degrees their poſterity fell off to idolatry, worſhiped the ſun, moon, and ſtars, deified dead men, and polluted themſelves with the moſt impure and abominable iſtitutions. The Iſraelites alone were kept to the worſhip of the true God, and even they were often infected by their idolatrous neighbours. Now all this is perfectly agreeable to what we find in Pagan hiſtory. The idolatries of the Pagans are acknowledged on all hands. It appears alſo from Pagan hiſtory that they grew up by degrees, as the Scriptures intimate. All the Pagan religions appear to have had the worſhip of one God ſuperior to the reſt, as their common foundation. They all endeavoured to render him propitious by ſacrifice; which ſurely cannot be an human invention, nor a cuſtom, which, if invented in one nation, would be readily propagated to another. They all joined mediatorial and inferior, alſo local and tutelar deities to the one God. And they all taught the frequency of divine communications. Hence the Pagan religions appear to be merely the degenerated offſpring of patriarchal revelations, and to infer them as their cauſe. Hence the pretences of kings, lawgivers, prieſts, and great men, to inſpiration, with the credulty of the multitude. That there had been divine communications, was beyond diſpute; and therefore all that reluctance to admit them, which appears in the preſent age, was over-ruled. At firſt there were no impoſtors. When therefore they did ariſe, it would not be eaſy for the multitude to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who had really divine communications, and thoſe who only pretended to them; till at laſt, all real inſpiration having ceaſed amongſt the Gentile world, their ſeveral religions kept poſſeſſion merely by the force of education, fraud in the prieſts, and fear in the people; and even theſe ſupports began to fail at laſt, about the time of Chriſt's coming. And thus many things, which have been thought to weaken the evidences for the Scripture accounts, are found to ſtrengthen them, by flowing naturally from that ſtate of religion in antient times, and from that only which the Scripture delivers.

A far-

A farther confirmation of the ſame Scripture accounts of the flood, diſperſion of mankind, and patriarchal revelations, may be had from the following very remarkable particular: it appears from hiſtory, that the different nations of the world have had, *cæteris paribus*, more or leſs knowledge, civil and religious, in proportion as they were nearer to, or had more intimate communication with, Egypt, Palæſtine, Chaldæa, and the other countries, that were inhabited by the moſt eminent perſons amongſt the firſt deſcendants of Noah, and by thoſe who are ſaid in Scripture to have had particular revelations made to them by God; and that the firſt inhabitants of the extreme parts of the world, reckoning Palæſtine as the centre, were in general mere ſavages. Now all this is utterly inexplicable upon the footing of infidelity, of the excluſion of all divine communications. Why ſhould not human nature be as ſagacious, and make as many diſcoveries, civil and religious, at the Cape of Good Hope, or in America, as in Egypt, Palæſtine, Meſopotamia, Greece, or Rome? why ſhould Palæſtine ſo far exceed them all, as it did confeſſedly? Allow the Scripture accounts, and all will be clear and eaſy. Mankind, after the flood, were firſt diſperſed from the plains of Meſopotamia. Some of the chief heads of families ſettled there, in Palæſtine, and in Egypt. Palæſtine had afterwards extraordinary divine illuminations beſtowed upon its inhabitants the Iſraelites and Jews. Hence its inhabitants had the pureſt notions of God, and the wiſeſt civil eſtabliſhment. Next after them come the Egyptians and Chaldæans, who, not being removed from their firſt habitations, and living in fertile countries watered by the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates, may be ſuppoſed to have preſerved more both of the antediluvian and poſtdiluvian revelations, alſo to have had more leiſure for invention, and a more free communication with the Iſraelites and Jews, than any other nations: whereas thoſe ſmall parties, which were driven farther and farther from each other into the extremes of heat and cold, entirely occupied in providing neceſſaries for themſelves, and alſo cut off by rivers, mountains, or diſtance, from all communication with Palæſtine, Egypt, and Chaldæa, would loſe much of their original ſtock, and have neither inclination nor ability to invent more.

Let us now conſider the hiſtory of particular facts, and inquire what atteſtations we can produce from Pagan hiſtory for the Scripture accounts of Abraham, and his poſterity the Iſraelites and Jews. We cannot expect much here, partly becauſe theſe things are of a private nature, if compared to the univerſal deluge, partly becauſe the Pagan hiſtory is either deficient, or groſſly corrupted with fable and fiction, till we come to the times of the declenſion of the kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah. However, ſome faint traces there are in antient times, and many concurring circumſtances in ſucceeding ones; and, as ſoon as the Pagan records come to be clear and certain, we have numerous and ſtrong confirmations of the ſacred hiſtory. Thus the hiſtory of Abraham ſeems to have tranſpired in ſome meaſure. It is alſo probable, that the antient Brachmans were of his poſterity by Keturah, that they derived their name from him, and worſhiped the true God only.

only. Moſes is mentioned by many Heathen writers, and the accounts which they give of his conducting the Iſraelites from Egypt to Canaan are ſuch as might be expected. The authors lived ſo long after Moſes, and had ſo little opportunity or inclination to know the exact truth, or to be particular, that their accounts cannot invalidate the Scripture hiſtory, though they do a little confirm it. The expulſion of the Canaanites by Joſhua ſeems to have laid the foundation of the kingdom of the Shepherds in the Lower Egypt mentioned by Manetho, and of the expulſion of the natives into the Upper Egypt; who, after ſome centuries, drove the ſhepherds back again into Canaan about the time of Saul. The Canaanites mentioned by St. Auſtin and others, upon the coaſt of Afric, may be of the ſame original. See Newton's Chronology, page 198. We may conclude from the book of Judges, that there were many petty ſovereignties in the neighbourhood of Canaan; and it appears from Pagan hiſtory, as Sir Iſaac Newton has rectified it, that the firſt great empire, that of Egypt, was not yet riſen. When David ſubdued the Philiſtines or Phœnicians, Cadmus and others ſeem to have fled into Greece, and to have carried letters with them, which the Philiſtines had probably learnt, about a generation before, from the copy of the law found in the ark taken from the Iſraelites. After Solomon's temple was built, the temple of Vulcan in Egypt, and others in other places, began to be built in imitation of it; juſt as the oracles of the Heathens were imitations of God's communications to the Iſraelites, and particularly of that by Urim and Thummim. Shiſhak, who came out of Egypt in the 5th year of Rehoboam, is the Seſoſtris of Herodotus; and this point, being ſettled, becomes a capital pin, upon which all the Pagan chronology depends. Hence Herodotus's liſt of the Egyptian kings is made probable and conſiſtent. As we advance farther to the Aſſyrian monarchy, the Scripture accounts agree with the profane ones rectified; and when we come ſtill farther to the æra of Nabonaſſar, and to the kings of Babylon and Perſia, which are poſterior to this æra and recorded in Ptolemy's canon, we find the agreement of ſacred and profane hiſtory much more exact, there being certain criterions in the profane hiſtory for fixing the facts related in it. And it is remarkable, that not only the direct relations of the hiſtorical books, but the indirect, incidental mention of things in the prophecies, tallies with true chronology; which ſurely is ſuch an evidence for their genuineneſs and truth, as cannot be called in queſtion. And, upon the whole, it may be obſerved, that the ſacred hiſtory is diſtinct, methodical, and conſiſtent throughout; the profane utterly deficient in the firſt ages, obſcure and full of fictions in the ſucceeding ones; and that it is but juſt clear and preciſe in the principal facts about the time that the ſacred hiſtory ends. So that this corrects and regulates that, and renders it intelligible in many inſtances, which muſt otherwiſe be given up as utterly inexplicable. How then can we ſuppoſe the ſacred hiſtory not to be genuine and true, or a wicked impoſture to riſe up, and continue not only undiſcovered, but even to increaſe to a moſt audacious height, in a nation

which of all others kept the moſt exact accounts of time? I will add one remark more: This ſame nation, who may not have loſt ſo much as one year from the creation of the world to the Babyloniſh captivity, as ſoon as they were deprived of the aſſiſtance of prophets, became moſt inaccurate in their methods of keeping time, there being nothing more erroneous than the accounts of Joſephus, and the modern Jews, from the time of Cyrus, to that of Alexander the Great; notwithſtanding that all the requiſite aſſiſtances might eaſily have been borrowed from the neighbouring nations, who now kept regular annals. Hence it appears, that the exactneſs of the ſacred hiſtory was owing to the divine aſſiſtance.

It is an evidence in favour of the Scriptures, allied to thoſe which I am here conſidering, that the manners of the perſons mentioned in the Scriptures have that ſimplicity and plainneſs, which is alſo aſcribed to the firſt ages of the world by Pagan writers; and both of them concur, by this, to intimate the novelty of the then preſent race, *i. e.* the deluge.

Beſides theſe atteſtations from profane hiſtory, we may conſider the Jews themſelves as bearing teſtimony to this day, in all countries of the world, to the truth of their antient hiſtory, *i. e.* to that of the Old and New Teſtaments. Allow this, and it will be eaſy to ſee how they ſhould ſtill perſiſt in their attachment to that religion, thoſe laws, and thoſe prophecies, which ſo manifeſtly condemn them, both in paſt times, and in the preſent. Suppoſe any conſiderable alteration made in their antient hiſtory, *i. e.* any ſuch as may anſwer the purpoſes of infidelity; and their preſent ſtate will be inexplicable.

The books of the New Teſtament are verified by hiſtory, in a manner ſtill more illuſtrious; theſe books being written, and the facts mentioned therein tranſacted, during the times of Auguſtus, Tiberius, and the ſucceeding Cæſars. Here we may obſerve,

Firſt, that the incidental mention of the Roman emperors, governors of Judæa, and the neighbouring provinces, the Jewiſh high-prieſts, ſects of the Jews, and their cuſtoms, of places, and of tranſactions, is found to be perfectly agreeable to the hiſtories of thoſe times. And as the whole number of theſe particulars is very great, they may be reckoned a full proof of the genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament, it being impoſſible for a perſon who had forged them, *i. e.* who was not an eye and ear-witneſs, and otherwiſe concerned with the tranſactions as the books require, but who had invented many hiſtories and circumſtances, *&c.* not to have been deficient, ſuperfluous, and erroneous. No man's memory or knowledge is ſufficient for ſuch an adaptation of feigned circumſtances, and eſpecially where the mention is incidental. Let any one conſider how often the beſt poets fail in this, who yet endeavour not to vary from the manners and cuſtoms of the age of which they write; at the ſame time that poetry neither requires nor admits ſo great a minuteneſs in the particular circumſtances of time, place, and perſons, as the writers of the New Teſtament have deſcended to naturally and incidentally.

Secondly,

Secondly, that Chriſt preached in Judæa and Galilee, made many diſciples, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, at the inſtigation of the chief men among the Jews; alſo that his diſciples preached after his death, not only in Judæa, but all over the Roman empire; that they converted multitudes, were perſecuted, and at laſt ſuffered death, for their firm adherence to their maſter; and that both Chriſt and his diſciples pretended to work many miracles; are facts atteſted by civil hiſtory in the ampleſt manner, and which cannot be called in queſtion. Now theſe facts are ſo connected with the other facts mentioned in the New Teſtament, that they muſt ſtand or fall together. There is no probable account to be given of theſe facts, but by allowing the reſt. For the proof of this, I appeal to every reader who will make the trial. It may alſo be concluded from the remarkable unwillingneſs of the preſent unbelievers to allow even the plaineſt facts in expreſs terms. For it ſhews them to be apprehenſive, that the connexion between the ſeveral principal facts mentioned in the New Teſtament is inſeparable, and that the atteſtation given to ſome by civil hiſtory may eaſily be extended to all.

It has been objected, that more mention ought to have been made of the common facts by the profane writers of thoſe times, alſo ſome acknowledgement of the miraculous ones, had they been true. To this we may anſwer, firſt, that Judæa was but a ſmall and diſtant province of the Roman empire; and the Jews themſelves, with whom the Chriſtians were for a long time confounded, much deſpiſed by the Romans. Secondly, that hiſtorians, politicians, generals, &c. have their imaginations ſo much preoccupied by affairs of ſtate, that matters purely religious are little regarded by them. Gallio cared for none of theſe things. Thirdly, that a perſon who attended in any great degree to the Chriſtian affairs, if a good man, could ſcarce avoid becoming a Chriſtian; after which his teſtimony ceaſes to be Pagan, and becomes Chriſtian; of which I ſhall ſpeak under the next head. Fourthly, that both thoſe who were favourers of the Chriſtians, and thoſe averſe to them in a moderate degree, one of which muſt be the caſe with great numbers, would have motives to be ſilent; the half-chriſtians would be ſilent for fear of being perſecuted; and the others would affect to take no notice of what they diſliked, but could not diſprove; which is a fact that occurs to daily obſervation. Laſtly, when theſe things are laid together, the atteſtations of the profane writers to the common facts appear to be ſuch as one might expect, and their ſilence as to the miraculous ones is accounted for.

Thirdly, all the Chriſtian writers, from the time of the apoſtles and downwards, bear teſtimony to the genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament, and the truth of the facts, in a great variety of ways direct and indirect, and in ſuch manner as might be expected. Their quotations from them are numberleſs, and agree ſufficiently with the preſent copies. They go every-where upon the ſuppoſition of the facts, as the foundation of all their diſcourſes, writings, hopes, fears, &c. They diſcover every-where the higheſt regard, and even veneration, both for the books and the authors. In ſhort, one cannot

not see how this testimony in favour of the Books of the New Testament can be invalidated, unless by supposing all the ecclesiastical writings of the first centuries to be forged also; or all the writers to have concurred to write as if they believed the genuineness and truth of these books, though they did not; or to have had no ability or inclination to distinguish genuineness and truth from forgery and falsehood; or by some other such supposition as will scarce bear to be named.

Here three questions may be asked, that bear some relation to this subject; and the answers to which will, I think, illustrate and confirm what has been advanced in the last paragraph.

Thus, first, it may be asked, why we have not more accounts of the life of Christ transmitted to us. To this I answer, that it is probable from St. Luke's preface that there were many short and imperfect accounts handed about very early; the authors of which, though they had not taken care to inform themselves accurately, did not, however, endeavour to impose on others designedly; and that all these grew into disuse, of course, after the four Gospels, or perhaps the three first, were published, or, at least, after the canon of the New Testament was formed; also that after this the Christians were so perfectly satisfied, and had the four Gospels in such esteem, that no one presumed to add any other accounts, and especially as all the apostles were then dead.

The second question is, How come we to have so little account, in the primitive writers, of the lives, labours, and sufferings of the apostles? I answer, that the apostles seem to have resided in Judæa, till Nero's army invaded it, and afterwards to have travelled into distant parts; and that neither their converts in Judæa, nor those in the distant barbarous countries, into which they travelled, could have any probable motive for writing their lives: also, that, as to other Christians, they had neither opportunities nor motives. The Christians looked up to Christ as their master, not to the apostles. Their great business was, to promote Christianity, not to gratify their own or others fruitless curiosity. They were not learned men, who had spent their lives in the study of annalists and biographers. They did not suspect, that an account of the lives of the apostles would ever be wanted, or that any one could call their integrity, inspiration, miracles, &c. in question. St. Luke seems to have designed by his Acts, chiefly to shew how the gospel first got firm footing amongst Jews, proselytes of the gate, and idolatrous Gentiles; in order to encourage the new converts to copy the examples of the Apostles and first preachers, and to publish the Gospel in all nations. Lastly, the primitive Christians had early disputes with Jews, Heathens, Heretics, and even with one another; which took up much of their attention and concern.

Thirdly, it may be asked, who were the persons that forged the spurious acts and revelations of several of the Apostles, &c. I answer, that, amongst the number of those who joined themselves to the Christians, there must be many whose hearts were not truly purified, and

and who, upon apoſtatizing, would become more ſelf-intereſted, vain-glorious, and impure, than before. Theſe were Antichriſts, as St. John calls them, who left the church becauſe they were not of it. Some of theſe forged books, to ſupport themſelves, and eſtabliſh their own tenets. Others might write partly like enthuſiaſts, partly like impoſtors. And, laſtly, there were ſome both weak and wicked men, though not ſo abandoned as the antient Heretics, who, in the latter end of the ſecond century, and afterwards, endeavoured to make converts by forgeries, and ſuch other wicked arts. However, all thoſe who are uſually called Fathers, in the firſt ages, ſtand remarkably clear of ſuch charges.

Fourthly, the propagation of Chriſtianity, with the manner in which it was oppoſed by both Jews and Gentiles, bears witneſs to the truth and genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament. But I forbear entering upon this argument, as it will come more properly in another place. Let me only obſerve here, that there are many paſſages in the Talmudical writings, which afford both light and confirmation to the New Teſtament, notwithſtanding that one principal deſign of the authors was to diſcredit it.

PROP. X.

THE AGREEMENT OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS WITH THEMSELVES AND WITH EACH OTHER, IS AN ARGUMENT BOTH OF THEIR GENUINENESS AND TRUTH.

THE truth of this propoſition will be evident, if a ſufficient number of theſe mutual agreements can be made out. It is never found, that any ſingle perſon, who deviates much from the truth, can be ſo perfectly upon his guard, as to be always conſiſtent with himſelf. Much leſs therefore can this happen in the caſe of a number, living alſo in different ages. Nothing can make them conſiſtent, but their copying faithfully after real facts. The inſtances will make this clearer.

The laws of the Iſraelities are contained in the Pentateuch, and referred to in a great variety of ways, direct and indirect, in the Hiſtorical Books, in the Pſalms, and in the Prophecies. The hiſtorical facts alſo in the preceding books are often referred to in thoſe that ſucceed, and in the Pſalms and Prophecies. In like manner the Goſpels have the greateſt harmony with each other, and the Epiſtles of St Paul with the Acts of the Apoſtles. And indeed one may ſay, that there is ſcarce any book of either Old or New Teſtament, which may not be ſhewn to refer to many of the reſt in ſome way or other. For it is to be obſerved, that the Bible has been ſtudied and commented upon far more than any other book whatſoever; and that it has been the buſineſs of believers in all ages to find out the mutual relations of its parts, and of unbelievers to ſearch for inconſiſtencies; alſo that the firſt meet every day with more and more evidences in favour of the Scriptures from the mutual agreements and coincidences here conſidered; and that unbelievers have never been able to alledge any inconſiſtencies that could in the leaſt invalidate the

the truth of the principal facts; I think, not even affect the divine inſpiration of the hiſtorical books, according to the ſecond or third hypotheſis abovementioned.

It will probably illuſtrate this propoſition, to bring a parallel inſtance from the Roman writers. Suppoſe then that no more remained of theſe writers than Livy, Tully, and Horace. Would they not, by their references to the ſame facts and cuſtoms, by the ſameneſs of ſtyle in the ſame writer, and differences in the different ones, and numberleſs other ſuch like circumſtances of critical conſideration, prove themſelves and one another to be genuine, and the principal facts related, or alluded to, to be true?

It is alſo to be obſerved, that this mutual harmony and ſelf-conſiſtency, in its ultimate ratio, is the whole of the evidence which we have for facts done in antient times, or diſtant places. Thus, if a perſon was ſo ſceptical as to call in queſtion the whole Roman hiſtory, even the moſt notorious facts, as their conqueſts firſt of Italy, and then of the neighbouring countries, the death of Cæſar, and the fall of the Weſtern empire by the invaſions of the Goths and Vandals, with all the evidences of theſe from books, inſcriptions, coins, cuſtoms, &c. as being all forged in order to deceive; one could only ſhew him, that it is inconſiſtent with what he ſees of human nature, to ſuppoſe that there ſhould be ſuch a combination to deceive; or that the agreement of theſe evidences with each other is far too great to be the effect of any ſuch fraudulent deſign, of chance, &c. And all theſe arguments are, in effect, only bringing a number of concurring evidences, whoſe ſum total ſoon approaches to the ultimate limit, *i. e.* to unity, or abſolute certainty, nearer than by any diſtinguiſhable difference. It does not therefore import, in reſpect of real conviction, after a certain number are brought, whether we bring any more or no; they can only add this imperceptible defect, *i. e.* practically nothing. Thus I ſuppoſe, that the remaining writings of Livy, Tully, and Horace, alone would ſatisfy any impartial man ſo much of the general extenſiveneſs of the Roman conqueſts, &c. that nothing perceptible could be added to his conviction; no more than any common event can, or ever does in fact, appear more credible from the teſtimony of a thouſand than of ten or twenty witneſſes of approved integrity. And whoever will apply this reaſoning to the preſent caſe, muſt perceive, as it appears to me, that the numberleſs minute, direct, and indirect agreements and coincidences, that preſent themſelves to all diligent readers of the Scriptures, prove their truth and genuineneſs beyond all contradiction, at leaſt according to the firſt and loweſt hypotheſis concerning divine inſpiration.

As to thoſe few and ſmall apparent inconſiſtencies, which are ſuppoſed to confine the inſpiration of the Scriptures to this loweſt ſenſe; one may obſerve, that they decreaſe every day as learned men inquire farther; and that, were the Scriptures perfectly exact in every particular, there muſt be ſome apparent difficulties, ariſing merely from our ignorance of antient languages, cuſtoms, diſtant places, &c. and conſequently that, if theſe be not more than our ignorance makes

it reasonable to expect, they are no objection at all. And of apparent inconsistencies one may remark in particular, that they exclude the supposition of forgery. No single forger, or combination of forgers, would have suffered the apparent inconsistencies which occur in a few places, such as the different genealogies of Christ in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and some little variations in the narration of the same fact in different Gospels. These are too obvious at first sight not to have been prevented, had there been any fraud.

I will here add an hypothesis, by which, as it appears to me, one may reconcile the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke. I suppose, then, that St. Matthew relates the real progenitors of Joseph; St. Luke the series of those who were heirs to David by birthright; and that both transcribed from genealogical tables, well known to the Jews of those times. St. Matthew after David takes Solomon, from whom Joseph lineally descended. St. Luke takes Nathan, upon whom, though younger than some others, and even than Solomon, we must suppose the birthright to be conferred, as in the instances of Jacob and Joseph. St. Matthew proceeds by real descent to Salathiel, at the time of the captivity; St. Luke proceeds by the heirs according to birthright, and comes to Salathiel likewise. We must therefore suppose, that Salathiel, Solomon's heir, was now David's also, by the extinction of all the branches of Nathan's family. St. Matthew then takes Zorobabel as Joseph's real progenitor, St. Luke takes him as heir or eldest son to Salathiel. Again, St. Matthew takes Abiud the real progenitor, St. Luke Rhesa the elder son; and thus St. Matthew proceeds by lineal descent to Joseph, St. Luke by heirs to the same Joseph; for we are to suppose, that Heli dying without heirs male, Joseph became his heir by birthright, *i. e.* heir to Zorobabel, *i. e.* to David. If we farther suppose, that the Virgin Mary was daughter to Heli, for which there appears to be some evidence, the solution will be more complete and more agreeable to the Jewish customs. It confirms this solution, that St. Matthew uses the word ἐγέννησε, which restrains his genealogy to lineal descent; whereas St. Luke uses the article τοῦ, which is very general. It confirms it also, that St Luke's descents, reckoning from David to Salathiel, are but about twenty-two years apiece; which is much too short for descents from father to son, but agrees very well to descents by birthright. As to St. Matthew's descents, they are far too long, after the captivity, for descents from father to son; but then it is easy to suppose, that some were left out on account of dying before their fathers, or some other reason. Three of the Kings of Judah are left out after Joram, perhaps on account of their being of the immediate posterity of the idolatrous Ahab's daughter Athaliah. Others are left out after the captivity, perhaps for some similar reason.

PROP. XI.

THE UNITY OF DESIGN, WHICH APPEARS IN THE DISPENSATIONS RECORDED IN THE SCRIPTURES, IS AN ARGUMENT NOT ONLY OF THEIR TRUTH AND GENUINENESS, BUT ALSO OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

FOR this unity is not only ſo great as to exclude forgery and fiction, in the ſame way as the mutual agreements mentioned in the laſt propoſition, but alſo greater than the beſt and ableſt men could have preſerved, in the circumſtance of theſe writers, without the divine aſſiſtance. In order to ſee this, let us inquire what this deſign is, and how it is purſued by the ſeries of events, and divine interpoſitions, recorded in the Scriptures.

The deſign is that of bringing all mankind to an exalted, pure, and ſpiritual happineſs, by teaching, enforcing, and begetting in them love and obedience to God. This appears from many paſſages in the Old Teſtament, and from almoſt every part of the New. Now we are not here to inquire in what manner an Almighty Being could ſooneſt and moſt effectually accompliſh this. But the queſtion is, Whether, laying down the ſtate of things as it has been, is, and probably will be, for our foundation, there be not a remarkable fitneſs in the diſpenſations aſcribed to God in the Scriptures, to produce this glorious effect; and whether the perſons who adminiſtered theſe diſpenſations did not here concur with a ſurpriſing uniformity, though none of them ſaw God's ultimate deſign completely, and ſome but very imperfectly; juſt as brutes by their inſtincts, and children by the workings of their natural faculties, contribute to their own preſervation, improvement, and happineſs, without at all foreſeeing that they do this. If we alter any of the circumſtances of the microcoſm, or macrocoſm, of the frame of our own natures, or of the external world that ſurround us, we ſhall have queſtion riſe up after queſtion in an endleſs ſeries, and ſhall never be ſatisfied, unleſs God ſhould be pleaſed to produce happineſs inſtantaneouſly, i. e. without any means, or ſecondary inſtrumental cauſes, at all; and, even then, we ſhould only be where we were at our firſt ſetting out, if things be conſidered in the true, ultimate light. We are therefore to lay down the real ſtate of things, as our foundation; i. e. we are to ſuppoſe man to be in a ſtate of good mixed with evil, born with appetites, and expoſed to temptations, to which if he yields, ſuffering muſt follow; which ſuffering, however, tends to eradicate the diſpoſition from whence it flowed, and to implant a better. We are to ſuppoſe him to be endued with voluntary powers, which enable him to model his affections and actions according to a rule; and that the love of God, his ultimate happineſs, can never be genuine, but by his firſt learning to fear God, by his being mortified to pleaſure, honour, and profit, and the moſt refined ſelfiſh deſires, and by his loving his neighbour as himſelf; i. e. we muſt ſuppoſe all that which practical writers mean by a ſtate of trial, temptation, moral exerciſe and improvement,

provement, and of practical free will. Let us see, therefore, how the several dispensations mentioned in the Scriptures, their being recorded there, and the subordinate parts which the prophets and apostles acted, conspired to bring about this ultimate end of man, both in each individual, and in the whole aggregate, considered as one great individual, as making up the mystical body of Christ, according to the language of St. Paul; and inquire, whether, if all other reasons were set aside, the mere harmony and concurrence of so many parts, and so many persons removed from each other by long intervals of time, in this one great design, will not compel us to acknowledge the genuineness, truth, and divine authority of the Scriptures.

The first thing which presents itself to us in the Scriptures, is the history of the Creation and Fall. These are not to be accounted for, as was said above, being the foundation upon which we go. However, the recording them by Moses, as tradition began to grow weak and uncertain, has been of great use to all those who have had them communicated by this means perfectly or imperfectly, *i. e.* to a great part of the world. This history impresses an awful and amiable sense of the Divine Being, our Creator and Judge; shews the heinousness of sin; and mortifies us to this world, by declaring that our passage through it must be attended with labour and sorrow. We find ourselves in this state: Revealed Religion did not bring us into it: nor is this state an objection to Revealed Religion, more than to Natural: however, Revealed Religion goes a step higher than Natural, and shews the immediate secondary cause, viz. the sin and wilful disobedience of our first parents. And when the account of paradise, of man's expulsion thence, and of the curse past upon him in Genesis, are compared with the removal of this curse, of sorrow, crying, pain, and death, with the renovation of all things, and with man's restoration to the tree of life and paradise, and his admission into the new Jerusalem in the last chapters of the Revelation, hope and fear quicken each other; and both conspire to purify the mind, and to advance the great design considered under this proposition.

How far the deluge was necessary, *cæteris manentibus*, for the purification of those who were destroyed by it, i. e. for accomplishing this great end in them, we cannot presume to say. It is sufficient, that there is no contrary presumption, that no methods consistent with the state of things in the antient world were neglected, as far as we know, and that we are not in the least able to propose a better scheme. We leave these rebellious, unhappy people, now translated into another state, to the same kind Providence which attended them in this, and all whose punishments on this side the grave are for melioration. However, the evident footsteps of this in the world, and the clear tradition of it, which would continue for several ages, also the history of it delivered by Moses, have an unquestionable good tendency. Sinners, who reflect at all, cannot but be alarmed at so dreadful an instance of divine severity. Far-

ther, if this hiſtory ſhould open to us a new relation, viz. that which we bear to the comets, this, compared with other parts of the Scriptures, may give us hereafter ſuch intimations concerning the kind, degree, and duration of future puniſhment, as will make the moſt obdurate tremble, and work in them that fear which is the beginning of wiſdom, and of the perfect love which caſteth out fear. At the ſame time, we may obſerve, that the covenant which God made, not only with Noah and his poſterity, but with all living creatures, after the flood, has a direct and immediate tendency to beget love.

The confuſion of languages, the conſequent diſperſion of mankind, and the ſhortening of the lives of the poſtdiluvians, all concurred to check the exorbitant growth and infection of wickedneſs. And we may judge how neceſſary theſe checks were, *cæteris manentibus*, from the great idolatry and corruption which appeared in the world within leſs than a thouſand years after the flood. The patriarchal revelations mentioned and intimated by Moſes had the ſame good effects, and were the foundations of thoſe Pagan religions, and, in great meaſure, of that moral ſenſe, which, corrupt and imperfect as they were, could not but be far preferable to an intire want of theſe. If it be objected, that, according to this, greater checks, and more divine communications, were wanted; I anſwer, that a greater diſperſion, or ſhortening of human life, might have prevented the deſtined increaſe of mankind, or the growth of knowlege, civil and religious, &c. and that more or more evident divine interpoſitions might have reſtrained the voluntary powers too much, or have precluded that Faith which is neceſſary to our ultimate perfection. Theſe are conjectures indeed, but they are upon the level with the objection, which is conjectural alſo.

The next remarkable particular that occurs, is the calling of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Now in this part of the Scripture hiſtory, as it is explained by the New Teſtament, we have the ſtrongeſt evidences of God's great deſign to purify and perfect mankind. He is called to forſake his relations, friends, and country, leſt he ſhould be corrupted by idolatry; he receives the promiſe of the land of Canaan, without ſeeing any probable means of obtaining it, beſides this promiſe, in order to wean him from the dependence on external means; he waits for a ſon till all natural expectations ceaſed, for the ſame purpoſe; by obtaining him, he learns to truſt in God, notwithſtanding apparent impoſſibilities; and the command to ſacrifice "his ſon, his only ſon Iſaac, whom he "loved," affords him a noble opportunity of exerciſing this truſt, and of ſhewing, that his principle of obedience to God was already ſuperior to the pureſt of earthly affections. Laſtly, when God promiſes him, as a reward for all his faith and obedience, the higheſt bleſſing, that "in him and his ſeed all the nations of the earth "ſhould be bleſſed," we muſt conceive this to be a declaration, firſt, that God himſelf is infinitely benevolent; and, ſecondly, that

that the happineſs of Abraham, his ſeed, and of all mankind who were to be bleſſed in his ſeed, muſt ariſe from their imitation of God in his benevolence. This whole univerſe is therefore a ſyſtem of benevolence, or, as St. Paul expreſſes it, a body, which, being "fitly framed and compacted together, increaſeth itſelf in love."

As to the objection which is ſometimes made to the ſacrifice of Iſaac, we may obſerve, that Abraham had himſelf received ſo many divine communications, and had been acquainted with ſo many made to his anceſtors, that he had no doubt about the command's coming from God, and did not even aſk himſelf the queſtion. It is probable, that in that early age there had as yet been few or no falſe pretences or illuſions. Abraham could as little doubt of God's right to Iſaac's life, or of his care of him in another ſtate. Theſe things were parts of the patriarchal religion. And yet great faith was required in Abraham, before he could overcome his natural affection and tenderneſs for Iſaac out of a principle of obedience to God, and truſt God for the accompliſhment of his promiſe, though he commanded him to deſtroy the only apparent means of accompliſhing it. Unleſs Abraham had been highly advanced in faith and obedience, he could not have ſtood ſo ſevere a trial; but this trial would greatly confirm theſe. And thus this hiſtory is ſo far from being liable to objection, that it is peculiarly conformable to thoſe methods, which mere reaſon and experience dictate as the proper ones, for advancing and perfecting true religion in the ſoul. When the typical nature of it is alſo conſidered, one cannot ſurely doubt of its divine authority. And, in the previous ſteps, through which Abraham paſſed in order to obtain this bleſſing, we have an adumbration and example of that faith, patience, and gradual progreſs in the ſpiritual life, which are neceſſary to all thoſe who hope to be "bleſſed with faithful Abraham."

Let us next paſs on to Moſes, and the Iſraelites under his conduct. Here we enter upon the conſideration of that people, who are the type of mankind in general, and of each individual in particular; who were the keepers of the oracles of God, and who, under God, agreeably to his promiſe to Abraham, have been, and will hereafter be, a bleſſing to all nations, and the means of reſtoring man to his paradiſiacal ſtate. And firſt they are oppreſſed with a cruel ſlavery in Egypt, leſt, being delighted with its fertility, and the preſent pleaſures of ſenſe which it afforded, they ſhould forget their true earthly country, "the land of promiſe." They then ſee the moſt amazing judgements inflicted upon their enemies the Egyptians by God, whilſt they themſelves were protected and delivered, that ſo they might learn confidence in his power and favour, and be thus prepared for their inſtitution in religion, and their trial and purification in the wilderneſs. And here the awful delivery of the law, their being fed from day to day by miracle, their being kept from commerce with all other nations, and from all cares of this world in building, planting, &c. till their old habits, and Egyptian cuſtoms and idolatries, were quite effaced, and the

practice of the new law eſtabliſhed, their having the hiſtory of the world, and particularly of their anceſtors, laid before them in one view, their tabernacle, their numerous rites and ceremonies, additional to thoſe of the patriarchal religion, and oppoſite to the growing idolatries of their neighbours the Egyptians and Canaanites, and which, beſides their uſes as types, were memorials of their relation to God, and of his conſtant preſence and protection, and, laſtly, the total extinction of that murmuring generation, who longed for the fleſh-pots of Egypt, cannot but appear to be intended for the purification of this choſen people, as being remarkably analogous to the methods of purification, which every good man experiences in himſelf, and ſees in others, *i. e.* cannot but appear highly conducive to the great deſign conſidered under this propoſition. At laſt, the education and inſtruction of this people being finiſhed, they are admitted to inherit the earthly promiſe made to their forefathers, and take poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan under Joſhua. And thus we come to a remarkable period in God's diſpenſations to them.

Now therefore they are, in ſome meaſure, left to themſelves, for the ſake of moral improvement, the divine interpoſitions being far leſs frequent and ſolemn, than at the firſt erection of the Theocracy under Moſes's adminiſtration. However, there were many ſupernatural interpoſitions, appointments, favours, corrections, &c. from Joſhua to Malachi, on account of their yet infant ſtate in reſpect of internal purity, whoſe tendency to improve the body politic of the nation, and each individual, is ſufficiently evident. After they were intirely left to themſelves; their canon being completed, they were then only to hear and digeſt what Moſes and the prophets had delivered unto them; and by this means to prepare themſelves for the laſt and completeſt diſpenſation.

But, before we enter upon this, let us briefly conſider the ſtate of the Gentile world, in the interval between Abraham and Chriſt, and what intimation the Old Teſtament gives us of their being alſo under the care of Providence, and in a ſtate of moral diſcipline. They had then, according to this, firſt, the tradition of patriarchal revelations. Secondly, all the nations in the neighbourhood of Canaan had frequent opportunities and motives to inform themſelves of the true religion. Thirdly, all thoſe who conquered them at any time, could not but learn ſomething both from their ſubjection, and their deliverance afterwards. Fourthly, the captivities by Salmaneſer and Nebuchadnezzar carried the knowledge of the true God to many diſtant nations. Laſtly, the diſtraction of the Jewiſh ſtate during the contemporary empires of Syria and Egypt, the riſe of the Samaritan religion, and the tranſlation of the Old Teſtament into Greek, conduced eminently to the ſame purpoſe. And as it is neceſſary in the preſent ſtate of things, for the exerciſe of various affections, and our moral improvement, that there ſhould be degrees and ſubordinations in common things, ſo it ſeems equally neceſſary, that it ſhould be ſo in religious matters: and thus the Gentiles

tiles may have had, in the interval between Abraham and Chriſt, all that ſuited their other circumſtances, all that they could have improved by an internal voluntary purity, other things remaining the ſame, which is always ſuppoſed. And it is remarkable in the view of this propoſition, that we learn ſo much from the ſcriptures concerning the moral diſcipline which God afforded to the Gentiles.

When we come to the New Teſtament, the great deſign of all God's diſpenſations appears in a ſtill more conſpicuous manner. Here we ſee how Chriſt began to erect his ſpiritual kingdom, and the apoſtles extended it: we have the ſubliméſt doctrines, and pureſt precepts, for effecting it in ourſelves and others, and the ſtrongeſt aſſurances that it will be effected at laſt, that this leaven will continue to operate till the whole lump be leavened. But, above all, it is remarkable, that the principal means for effecting this is by ſubmiſſion and ſufferance, not reſiſtance and external violence. The preachers are to undergo ſhame, perſecution, and death, as the Lord of Life and Glory did before them: this is that "fooliſhneſs of God," which is "wiſer than men", and that "weakneſs of God," which is "ſtronger than men." Theſe means ſeem fooliſh and weak to the falſe wiſdom of this world. But, if they be compared with the frame of our natures, and with the real conſtitution of things, they will appear to be perfectly ſuited to produce in all mankind that beſt of ends, the annihilation of ſelf, and worldly deſires, and the pure and perfect love of God, and of all his creatures, in and through him.

Setting aſide therefore the greatneſs of this end, and its ſuitableneſs to the divine goodneſs; ſetting aſide alſo the miracles which have concurred in it; I ſay, that the coincidence of the hiſtories, precepts, promiſes, threatenings, and prophecies of the Scriptures in this one point is an argument not only of their genuineneſs and truth, but of their divine authority. Had the writers been guided by their own ſpirits, and not by the ſupernatural influence of the ſpirit of truth, they could neither have opened to us the various diſpenſations of God tending to this one point, nor have purſued it themſelves, with ſuch intire ſteadineſs and uniformity, through ſo many different ages of the world.

The gradual opening of this deſign is an argument to the ſame purpoſe. Man's wiſdom, if it could have formed ſuch a deſign, would have ruſhed forward upon it prematurely. At the ſame time we may obſerve, that this deſign is implied in the Scriptures from the firſt, though not expreſſed ſo as to be then underſtood; which is another argument of their divine original.

Cor. From the reaſoning uſed under this propoſition we may be led to believe, that all the great events which happen in the world have the ſame uſe as the diſpenſations recorded in the Scriptures, viz. that of being a courſe of moral diſcipline for nations and individuals, and of preparing the world for future diſpenſations. Thus the irruption of the barbarous nations into the Roman empire, the Mahometan impoſture, the corruptions of the Chriſtian religion, the ignorance and darkneſs which reigned for ſome centuries during the

groſſeſt of theſe corruptions, the Reformation, reſtoration of letters, and the invention of printing, three great contemporary events which ſucceeded the dark times, the riſe of the enthuſiaſtical ſects ſince the Reformation, the vaſt increaſe and diffuſion of learning in the preſent times, the growing extenſiveneſs of commerce between various nations, the great prevalence of infidelity amongſt both Jews and Chriſtians, the diſperſion of Jews and Jeſuits into all known parts of the world, &c. &c. are all events, which, however miſchievous ſome of them may ſeem to human wiſdom, are, *cæteris manentibus*, the moſt proper and effectual way of haſtening the kingdom of Chriſt, and the renovation of all things.

PROP. XII.

DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS, MIRACLES, AND PROPHECIES, ARE AGREEABLE TO NATURAL RELIGION, AND EVEN SEEM NECESSARY IN THE INFANCY OF THE WORLD.

SINCE God is a being of infinite juſtice, mercy, and bounty, according to natural religion, it is reaſonable to expect, that if the deficiencies of natural reaſon, or the inattention of mankind to the footſteps of his providence, were ſuch at any time as that all the world were in danger of being loſt in ignorance, irreligion, and idolatry, God ſhould interpoſe by extraordinary inſtruction, by alarming inſtances of judgement and mercy, and by prophetical declarations of things to come, in order to teach men his power, his juſtice, and his goodneſs, by ſenſible proofs and manifeſtations. We muſt not ſay here, that God could not ſuffer this; but inquire from hiſtory, whether he has or no. Now I ſuppoſe it will eaſily be acknowleged, that this was the caſe with the Gentile world in antient times, and that the Judaical and Chriſtian inſtitutions have greatly checked irreligion and idolatry, and advanced true natural religion; which is a remarkable coincidence in favour of theſe inſtitutions, though all other evidences for them were ſet aſide. Neither muſt we ſay here, that ſince God permits groſs ignorance in ſome nations, the Hottentots for inſtance, even to this day, he might have permitted it in all mankind. Allow that we know ſo little of his unſearchable judgements, as not to be able to make any certain concluſion: yet ſurely it is much more agreeable to the forenamed attributes, and to the analogies of other things, that the bulk of mankind ſhould have ſuch knowlege of God as ſuits their intellectual faculties and other circumſtances, and carries them forwards in moral improvement, than that all ſhould ſtand ſtill or go backwards, or make leſs improvement in religion than tallies with their improvements in other things: alſo that there ſhould be a ſubordination in religious advantages, rather than a perfect equality.

Natural religion alſo teaches us to conſider God as our governor, judge, and father. Now all theſe ſuperiors have two ways of adminiſtration, inſtruction, and providence, for the well-being of their inferiors, ordinary and extraordinary. It is therefore natural to expect an extraordinary interpoſition by revelation, miracle, and prophecy,

phecy, and that especially in that infancy of the world after the deluge, which both sacred and profane history assure us of; inasmuch as both states and individuals require much more of the extraordinary interposition of governors and parents in their infancy, than afterwards: all which has a remarkable correspondence with the history of revelation, as it is in fact. And the analogical presumptions for miracles, in this and the last paragraph, seem at least equal to any presumption we have, or can have, in this our state of ignorance of the whole of things, against them.

But there is another argument in favour of miraculous interpositions, which may be drawn from the foregoing theory of human nature. I take it for granted, that mankind have not been upon this earth from all eternity. Eternity neither suits an imperfect, finite race of beings, nor our habitation the earth. It cannot have revolved round the sun, as it does now, from all eternity; it must have had such changes made in it from its own fabrick and principles, from the shocks of comets, &c. in infinite time, as would be inconsistent with our survival. There was therefore a time when man was first placed upon the earth. In what state was he then placed? an infant, with his mind a blank, void of ideas, as children now are born? He would perish instantly, without a series of miracles to preserve, educate, and instruct him. Or, if he be supposed an adult with a blank mind, i. e. without ideas, associations, and the voluntary powers of walking, handling, speaking, &c. the conclusion is the same; he must perish also, unless conducted by a miraculous interposition and guardianship. He must therefore have so much of knowledge, and of voluntary and secondarily automatic powers, amongst which speech must be reckoned as a principal one, impressed upon him in the way of instinct, as would be necessary for his own preservation, and that of his offspring; and this instinct is to all intents and purposes divine revelation, since he did not acquire it by natural means. It is also of the nature of prophecy; for it seems impossible for mankind to subsist upon the earth, as it now is, without some foreknowledge, and the consequent methods of providing for futurity, such for instance, as brutes have, or even greater, since man, unprovided with manual arts, is peculiarly exposed to dangers, necessities, and hardships.

Let us next consider, how the first men are to be provided with the knowlege of God, and a moral sense: for it seems necessary, that they should be possessed of some degree of these; else the sensual and selfish desires would be so exorbitant, as to be inconsistent both with each man's own safety, and with that of his neighbour; as may be gathered from the accounts of savage nations, who yet are not intirely destitute of the knowledge of God, and the moral sense. Now, to deduce the existence and attributes of God, even in a very imperfect manner, from natural phænomena, requires, as it seems to me, far more knowledge and ratiocination, than men could have for many generations, from their natural powers; and that especially if we suppose language not to be inspired, but attained in a natural way.

way. And it appears both from the foregoing account of the moral ſenſe, and from common obſervation, that this requires much time, care, and cultivation, beſides the previous knowledge of God, before it can be a match for the impetuoſity of natural deſires. We may conclude therefore, that the firſt men could not attain to that degree of the knowledge of God, and a moral ſenſe, which was neceſſary for them, without divine inſpiration.

There are ſeveral particulars in the Moſaic account of the creation, fall, and circumſtances of the antient world, which tally remarkably with the method of reaſoning uſed here. Thus, man is at firſt placed in a paradiſe, where there was nothing noxious, and conſequently where he would need leſs miraculous interpoſition in order to preſerve him. He lives upon the fruits of the earth, which want no previous arts of preparing them, and which would ſtrike him by their ſmells, and, after an inſtance or two, incite him to pluck and taſte: whereas animal diet, beſides its inconſiſtency with a ſtate of pure innocence and happineſs, requires art and preparation neceſſarily. There is only one man, and one woman, created, that ſo the occaſions for exerting the ſocial affections may not offer themſelves in any great degree, before theſe affections are generated; but, on the contrary, the affections may grow naturally, as it were, out of the occaſions. The nakedneſs, and want of ſhame, in our firſt parents, are concurring evidences of the abſence of art, acquired affections, evil, &c. i. e. of a paradiſiacal ſtate. In this ſtate they learnt to give names to the animal world, perhaps from the automatic and ſemivoluntary exertions of the organs of ſpeech, which the ſight of the creatures, or the ſound of their ſeveral cries, would excite; having probably a ſufficient ſtock of language for communication with God, and for converſing with each other about their daily food, and other neceſſary things, given them by immediate inſtinct or inſpiration. And thus they would be initiated, by naming the animals, into the practice of inventing, learning, and applying words. For the ſame reaſons we may ſuppoſe, that they learnt many other things, and particularly the habit of learning, during their abode in paradiſe. Nay, it may perhaps be, that this growth of acquired knowledge, with the pleaſantneſs of it, might put them upon learning evil as well as good, and excite the forbidden curioſity. After the fall, we find God providing them with cloaths, Cain baniſhed from the preſence of God, an argument that others were permitted to have recourſe to this preſence to aſk counſel, &c. his poſterity inventing arts for themſelves, Enoch and Noah walking with God before the flood, and Abraham afterwards; all the antediluvian patriarchs long-lived, the poſtdiluvian long-lived alſo for ſome generations; amongſt other reaſons, that they might inſtruct poſterity in religious and other important truths; and the divine interpoſitions continuing through the whole antediluvian world, and gradually withdrawn in the poſtdiluvian. And it ſeems to me, to ſay the leaſt, a very difficult thing for any man, even at this day, to invent a more probable account of the firſt peopling of this earth, than that which Moſes has given us.

PROP. XIII.

THE OBJECTION MADE AGAINST THE MIRACLES RECORDED IN THE SCRIPTURES, FROM THEIR BEING CONTRARY TO THE COURSE OF NATURE, IS OF LITTLE OR NO FORCE.

IT is alleged here by the objectors, that the courſe of nature is fixed and immutable; and that this is evinced by the concurrent teſtimony of all mankind in all ages; and conſequently that the teſtimony of a few perſons, who affirm the contrary, cannot be admitted; but is, *ipſo facto*, invalidated by its oppoſing general, or even univerſal experience. Now to this I anſwer,

Firſt, that we do not, by admitting the teſtimony of mankind concerning the deſcent of heavy bodies upon the ſurface of our earth, the common effects of heat and cold, &c. ſuppoſe that this invalidates the teſtimony of thoſe who declare they have met with contrary appearances is certain caſes. Each party teſtifies what they have ſeen; and why may not the evidence of both be true? It does not follow, becauſe a thing has happened a thouſand, or ten thouſand times, that it never has failed, nor even can fail. Nothing is more common or conſtant than the effect of gravity in making all bodies upon the ſurface of our earth tend to its centre. Yet the rare extraordinary influences of magnetiſm and electricity can ſuſpend this tendency. Now, before magnetiſm and electricity were diſcovered, and verified by a variety of concurrent facts, there would have been as much reaſon to diſallow the evidence of their particular effects atteſted by eye-witneſſes, as there is now to diſallow the particular miracles recorded in the Scriptures; and yet we ſee, that ſuch a diſallowance would have been a haſty concluſion, would have been quite contrary to the true nature of things. And, in fact, whatever may be the caſe of a few perſons, and particularly of thoſe who think that they have an intereſt in diſproving Revealed Religion, the generality of mankind, learned and unlearned, philoſophical and vulgar, in all ages, have had no ſuch diſpoſition to reject a thing well atteſted by witneſſes of credit, becauſe it was contrary to the general, or even univerſal, tenor of former obſervations. Now it is evident to conſidering perſons, eſpecially if they reflect upon the foregoing hiſtory of aſſociation, that the diſpoſitions to aſſent and diſſent are generated in a human mind from the ſum total of the influences, which particular obſervations have had upon it. It follows, therefore, ſince the bulk of mankind, of all ranks and orders, have been diſpoſed to receive facts the moſt ſurpriſing, and contrary to the general tenor, upon their being atteſted in a certain limited degree, that extraordinary facts are not in a certain way of conſidering the thing, out of the tenor of nature, but agreeable to it; that here therefore, as well as in common facts, the ſtreſs is to be laid upon the credibility of the witneſſes; and that to do otherwiſe is an argument either of ſome great ſingularity of mind, or of an undue biaſs.

Secondly, if it ſhould be alleged by the objectors that they do not mean, by the courſe of nature, that tenor of common obſervations

which

which occured to the firſt rude ages of the world, or even that tenor which is uſually called ſo at preſent; but thoſe more general laws of matter and motion, to which all the various phænomena of the world, even thoſe which are apparently moſt contrary to one another, may be reduced; and that it is probable, that univerſal experience would concur to ſupport the true laws of nature of this kind, were mankind ſufficiently induſtrious and accurate in bringing together the facts, and drawing the concluſions from them; in which caſe, any deviations from the tenor of nature, thus ſupported and explained, would be far more improbable, than according to the ſuppoſition of the foregoing paragraph; we anſwer, that this objection is a mere conjecture. Since we do not yet know what theſe true laws of matter and motion are, we cannot preſume to ſay whether all phænomena are reducible to them, or not. Modern philoſophers have indeed made great advances in natural knowledge; however, we are ſtill in our infant ſtate, in reſpect of it, as much as former ages, if the whole of things be taken into conſideration. And this objection allows and ſuppoſes it to be ſo. Since therefore it was the proper method for former ages, in order to make advances in real knowledge, to abide by the award of credible teſtimonies, however contrary theſe teſtimonies might appear to their then notions and analogies, ſo this is alſo the proper method for us.

If indeed we put the courſe of nature for that ſeries of events, which follow each other in the order of cauſe and effect by the divine appointment, this would be an accurate and philoſophical way of ſpeaking; but then we muſt at once acknowledge, that we are ſo ignorant of what may be the divine purpoſes and appointments, of ſecret cauſes, and of the correſponding variety of events, that we can only appeal to the facts, to credible relations of what actually has been, in order to know what is agreeable to the courſe of nature, thus explained. The ſcripture miracles may not be at all contrary to its fixedneſs and immutability. Nor can any objection lie againſt them, if we conſider things in this light, from the preſent notions of philoſophical men, *i. e.* from the courſe of nature, underſtood in a popular ſenſe; ſince this falls ſo ſhort of the true courſe of nature as here defined; *i. e.* as admitting the inſtrumentality of beings ſuperior to us, men divinely inſpired, good angels, evil ſpirits, and many other influences, of which our preſent philoſophy can take no cognizance.

With reſpect to moral analogy, the caſe is ſomewhat different. If the moral attributes of God, and the general rules of his providence, be ſuppoſed to be eſtabliſhed upon a ſure footing, then a ſeries of events, which ſhould be contrary to theſe, would have a ſtrong preſumption againſt them. And yet it becomes us to be very diffident here alſo. God is infinite, and we finite: we may therefore, from ſeeing only a ſmall portion, judge what we ſee to be different from what it is. However, Revealed Religion has no occaſion in general for any ſuch apology. Natural and Revealed Religion, the word and works of God, are in all principal things moſt wonderfully analogous; as has been ſufficiently ſhewn by the advocates for Re-

vealed Religion, and moſt eſpecially by Biſhop Butler in his Analogy. As far therefore as moral analogy carries weight, there is poſitive evidence for the Scripture miracles. And our comprehenſion of natural analogy is ſo imperfect as ſcarce to afford any preſumption againſt them; but leaves the evidence in their favour, of nearly the ſame ſtrength as it would have had for other facts.

Thirdly, Let it be obſerved, that the evidences for the Scripture miracles are ſo numerous, and in other reſpects ſo ſtrong, as to be nearly equal to any evidences that can be brought for the moſt common facts. For it is very manifeſt, as has been obſerved before, that a great number of credible evidences make a ſum total, that is equal to unity, or abſolute certainty, as this has been conſidered in the foregoing part of this work, nearer than by any perceptible difference: and the greateſt number can never arrive quite to unity. The evidence therefore for common facts cannot exceed that for the Scripture miracles by more than an imperceptible difference, if we eſtimate evidences according to the trueſt and moſt accurate manner. Hence the nearly equal evidences for each muſt eſtabliſh each in nearly an equal degree, unleſs we ſuppoſe either ſome ſuch inconſiſtency between them, as that, common facts being allowed, the Scripture miracles muſt be abſolutely rejected, or that there is ſome evidence againſt the Scripture miracles, which may be put in competition with that for them; neither of which things can be ſaid with any colour of reaſon.

Fourthly, This whole matter may be put in another, and perhaps a more natural, as well as a more philoſophical light; and that eſpecially if the foregoing account of the mind be allowed. Aſſociation, i. e. analogy, perfect and imperfect, is the only foundation upon which we in fact do, or can, or ought to aſſent; and conſequently a diſſonance from analogy, or a repugnancy thereto, is a neceſſary foundation for diſſent. Now it happens ſometimes, that the ſame thing is ſupported and impugned by different analogies; or, if we put repugnance to analogy as equivalent to miracle, that both a fact and its non-exiſtence imply a miracle; or, ſince this cannot be, that that ſide alone, which is repugnant to the moſt and the moſt perfect analogies, is miraculous, and therefore incredible. Let us weigh the Scripture miracles in this ſcale. Now the progreſs of the human mind, as may be ſeen by all the inquiries into it, and particularly by the hiſtory of aſſociation, is a thing of a determinate nature; a man's thoughts, words, and actions, are all generated by ſomething previous; there is an eſtabliſhed courſe for theſe things, an analogy, of which every man is a judge from what he feels in himſelf, and ſees in others; and to ſuppoſe any number of men, in determinate circumſtances, to vary from this general tenor of human nature in like circumſtances, is a miracle, and may be made a miracle of any magnitude, *i. e.* incredible to any degree, by increaſing the number and magnitude of the deviations. It is therefore a miracle in the human mind, as great as any can be conceived in the human body, to ſuppoſe that infinite multitudes of Chriſtians, Jews, and Heathens,

Heathens, in the primitive times, ſhould have borne ſuch unqueſtionable teſtimony, ſome expreſsly, others by indirect circumſtances, as hiſtory informs us they did, to the miracles ſaid to be performed by Chriſt and his apoſtles, upon the human body, unleſs they were really performed. In like manner, the reception which the miracles recorded in the Old Teſtament met with, is a miracle, unleſs thoſe miracles were true. Thus alſo the very exiſtence of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Religions, &c. &c. are miracles, as is abundantly ſhewn by the advocates for Chriſtianity, unleſs we allow the Scripture miracles. Here then a man muſt either deny an analogy and aſſociation, and become an abſolute ſceptic, or acknowledge that very ſtrong analogies may ſometimes be violated; *i.e.* he muſt have recourſe to ſomething miraculous, to ſomething ſupernatural, according to his narrow views. The next queſtion then will be, which of the two oppoſite miracles will agree beſt with all his other notions; whether it be more analogous to the nature of God, providence, the allowed hiſtory of the world, the known progreſs of man in this life, &c. &c. to ſuppoſe that God imparted to certain ſelect perſons, of eminent piety, the power of working miracles; or to ſuppoſe that he confounded the underſtandings, affections, and whole train of aſſociations, of intire nations, ſo as that men, who, in all other things, ſeem to have been conducted in a manner like all other men, ſhould, in reſpect of the hiſtory of Chriſt, the Prophets, and Apoſtles, act in a manner repugnant to all our ideas and experiences. Now, as this laſt ſuppoſition cannot be maintained at all upon the footing of Deiſm, ſo it would be but juſt as probable as the firſt, even though the objector ſhould deny the poſſibility of the being of a God. For the leaſt preſumption, that there may be a being of immenſe or infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs, immediately turns the ſcale in favour of the firſt ſuppoſition.

Fifthly, It is to be conſidered, that the evidences for the Scripture miracles are many, and moſt of them independent upon one another; whereas the diſpenſation itſelf is a connected thing, and the miracles remarkably related to each other. If therefore only ſo much as one miracle could be proved to have been really wrought in confirmation of the Jewiſh or Chriſtian revelations, there would be leſs objection to the ſuppoſition of a ſecond; and, if this be proved, ſtill leſs to that of a third, &c. till at laſt the reluctance to receive them would quite vaniſh (which indeed appears to have been the caſe in the latter part of the primitive times, when the inconteſtable evidences for the Chriſtian miracles had been ſo much examined and conſidered, as quite to overcome this reluctance; and it ſeems difficult to account for the credulity in receiving falſe miracles which then appeared, but upon ſuppoſition that many true ones had been wrought). But it is not ſo with the evidences. The greateſt part of theſe have ſo little dependence on the reſt, as may be ſeen even from this chapter, that they muſt be ſet aſide ſeparately by the objector. Here it ought to be added, that the objectors have ſcarce

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ever attempted to set aside any part of the evidence, and never succeeded in such an attempt; which is of itself a strong argument in favour of the Scriptures, since this is plainly the most natural and easy way of disproving a thing that is false. It ought also to be observed here, that the accomplishment of prophecy, by implying a miracle, does in like manner overbear the reluctance to receive miracles. So that if any considerable events, which have already happened in the world, can be proved to have been foretold in Scripture in a manner exceeding chance and human foresight, the objection to miracles, considered in this proposition, falls to the ground at once.

Sixthly, if any one should affirm or think, as some persons seem to do, that a miracle is impossible, let him consider, that this is denying God's omnipotence, and even maintaining, that man is the supreme agent in the universe.

PROP. XIV.

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCES FOR THE GENUINENESS, TRUTH, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES, DO NOT GROW LESS FROM AGE TO AGE; BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, IT MAY RATHER BE PRESUMED, THAT THEY INCREASE.

IT is sometimes alleged as an indirect objection to the Christian Religion, that the evidence for facts done in former times, and at remote places, decreases with the distance of time and place; and consequently that a time may come hereafter, when the evidence for the Christian Religion will be so inconsiderable as not to claim our assent, even allowing that it does so now. To this I answer,

First, That printing has so far secured all considerable monuments of antiquity, as that no ordinary calamities of wars, dissolutions of governments, &c. can destroy any material evidence now in being, or render it less probable, in any discernible degree, to those who shall live five hundred or a thousand years hence.

Secondly, That so many new evidences and coincidences have been discovered in favour of the Jewish and Christian histories, since the three great concurring events of printing, the reformation of religion in these Western parts, and the reformation of letters, as in some measure, to make up for the evidences lost in the preceding times; and, since this improvement of the historical evidences is likely to continue, there is great reason to hope, that they will grow every day more and more irresistible to all candid, serious inquirers.

One might also allege, if it were needful, that our proper business is to weigh carefully the evidence which appears at present, leaving the care of future ages to Providence; that the prophetical evidences are manifestly of an increasing nature, and so may compensate for a decrease in the historical ones; and that though, in a gross way of speaking, the evidences for facts distant in time and place are weakened by this distance, yet they are not weakened in an exact proportion

portion in any caſe, nor in any proportion in all caſes. No one can think a fact relating to the Turkiſh empire leſs probable at London than at Paris, or at fifty years diſtance than at forty.

PROP. XV.

THE PROPHECIES DELIVERED IN THE SCRIPTURES PROVE THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OE THE SCRIPTURES, EVEN PREVIOUSLY TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE GENUINENESS OF THESE PROPHECIES; BUT MUCH MORE, IF THAT BE ALLOWED.

IN order to evince this propoſition, I will diſtinguiſh the prophecies into four kinds, and ſhew in what manner it holds in reſpect of each kind.

There are then contained in the Scriptures,

Firſt, Prophecies that relate to the ſtate of the nations which bordered upon the land of Canaan.

Secondly, thoſe that relate to the political ſtate of the Iſraelites and Jews in all ages.

Thirdly, The types and prophecies that relate to the office, time of appearance, birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the promiſed Meſſiah, or Chriſt.

Fourthly, The prophecies that relate to the ſtate of the Chriſtian church, eſpecially in the latter times, and to the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

I begin with the prophecies of the firſt kind, or thoſe which relate to the ſtate of Amalek, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Syria, Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, and the four great ſucceſſive empires of the Babylonians, Perſians, Greeks, and Romans. Now here I obſerve, firſt, that if we admit both the genuineneſs of theſe prophecies and the truth of the common hiſtory of the Scriptures, the very remarkable coincidence of the facts with the prophecies will put their divine authority out of all doubt; as I ſuppoſe every reader will acknowledge, upon recollecting the many particular prophecies of this kind, with their accompliſhments, which occur in the Old Teſtament. Secondly, if we allow only the genuineneſs of theſe prophecies, ſo great a part of them may be verified by the remains of antient Pagan hiſtory, as to eſtabliſh the divine authority of that part. Thus, if Daniel's prophecies of the image, and four beaſts, were written by him in the time of the Babylonian empire, if the prophecies concerning the fall of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, &c. be genuine, &c. even profane hiſtory will ſhew, that more than human foreſight was concerned in the delivery of them. Thirdly, that ſuch of theſe prophetic events as remain to this day, or were evidently poſterior to the delivery of the prophecies, prove their divine authority even antecedently to the conſideration of their genuineneſs, as is affirmed in the former part of the propoſition. Of this kind are the perpetual ſlavery of Egypt; the perpetual deſolation of Tyre and Babylon: the wild, unconquered ſtate of the Iſhmaelites; the great power and ſtrength of the Roman empire beyond thoſe of the three foregoing

going empires; its diſmiſſion into ten kingdoms; its not being ſubdued by any other, as the three foregoing were; the riſe of the Mahometan religion, and Saracenic empire; the limited continuance of this empire; and the riſe and progreſs of the empire of the Turks. To theſe we may add the tranſactions that paſſed between the contemporary kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, propheed of in the eleventh chapter of Daniel. For, ſince theſe prophecies reach down to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the beginning ſubjection of theſe kingdoms to the Roman power, they cannot but have been delivered prior to the events, as may appear both from the conſideration of the Septuagint tranſlation of the book of Daniel, and the extinction of the biblical Hebrew as a living language before that time, even though the book of Daniel ſhould not be conſidered as a genuine book; for which ſuſpicion there is, however, no foundation. Laſtly, we may remark, that theſe, and indeed all the other prophecies, have the ſame marks of genuineneſs as the reſt of the Scriptures, or as any other books; that they cannot be ſeparated from the context without the utmoſt violence; ſo that, if this be allowed to be genuine, thoſe muſt alſo; that hiſtory and chronology were in ſo uncertain a ſtate in antient times, that the prophecies concerning foreign countries could not have been adapted to the facts, even after they had happened, with ſo much exactneſs as modern inquirers have ſhewn the Scripture prophecies to be, by a learned nation, and much leſs by the Jews, who were remarkably ignorant of what paſſed in foreign countries; and that thoſe prophecies, which are delivered in the manner of dream and viſion, have a very ſtrong internal evidence for their genuineneſs, taken from the nature of dreams, as this is explained in the foregoing part of this work.

I proceed, in the ſecond place, to ſhew how the prophecies, that relate to the political ſtate of the Jews, prove the divine authority of the ſcriptures. And here, paſſing by many prophecies of inferior note and of a ſubordinate nature, we may confine ourſelves to the promiſe, or prophecy, of the land of Canaan, given to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; to the prophecies concerning the captivity of the ten tribes, and the Babyloniſh captivity of the two tribes, with their return after ſeventy years; and to thoſe concerning the much greater captivity and deſolation predicted to fall upon thoſe choſen people in the xxviiith chapter of Deuteronomy, in various places of the prophecies, and by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the New Teſtament. There was no natural probability, at the time when theſe prophecies were delivered, that any of theſe events ſhould happen in the manner in which they were predicted, and have accordingly happened; but, in ſome, the utmoſt improbability: ſo that it muſt appear to every candid intelligent inquirer, that nothing leſs than ſupernatural knowlege could have enabled thoſe who delivered theſe predictions, to make them. The divine authority, therefore, of the books which contain theſe predictions is unqueſtionable, provided we allow them to be genuine.

Now, beſides the forementioned evidences of this, theſe prophecies have ſome peculiar ones attending them. Thus the mere depar-

ture of the Iſraelites out of Egypt, in order to go to the land of Canaan, and carrying Joſeph's bones with them, plainly imply that the promiſe of this land had been given to their anceſtors. Thus alſo the prophecies relating to the captivities of Iſrael and Judah, and to their reſtorations, make ſo large a part of the old prophets, that, if they be not genuine, the whole books muſt be forged; and the genuineneſs of thoſe in the New Teſtament cannot but be allowed by all.

I come now, in the third place, to ſpeak of the types and prophecies that relate to Chriſt, the time of his appearance, his offices, birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion. Many of theſe are applied to him by himſelf, and by the authors of the books of the New Teſtament; but there are alſo many others, whoſe diſcovery and application are left to the ſagacity and induſtry of Chriſtians in all ages. This ſeems to be a field of great extent, and the evidence ariſing from it of an increaſing nature. It is probable, that the Chriſtians of the firſt ages were acquainted with ſo many more circumſtances relating to the life, death, &c. of Chriſt, as on this account to be able to apply a larger number of types and prophecies to him than we can. But then this may perhaps be compenſated to us by the daily opening of the Scriptures, and our growing knowledge in the typical and prophetical nature of them. What is already diſcovered of this kind ſeems no ways poſſible to be accounted for, but from the ſuppoſition, that God, by his power and foreknowledge, ſo ordered the actions, hiſtory, ceremonies, &c. of the Patriarchs and Jews, and the language of the prophets, as to make them correſpond with Chriſt, his offices, actions, and ſufferings. If any doubt of this, let him attempt to apply the types and prophecies to any other perſon. I will juſt mention four claſſes, into which theſe types and prophecies may be diſtinguiſhed, and under each of them a few remarkable inſtances. There are then,

Firſt, prophecies which evidently relate to Chriſt, and either to him alone, or to others in an inferior degree only. Such are that of Jacob concerning Shiloh, of Moſes concerning a great prophet and lawgiver that ſhould come after him, of Iſaiah in his liid and liiid chapters, of Daniel concerning the Meſſiah, many in almoſt all the prophets concerning a great prince, a prince of the houſe of David, &c. who ſhould make a new covenant with his people, &c. &c.

Secondly, typical circumſtances in the lives of eminent perſons, as of Iſaac, Joſeph, Joſhua, David, Solomon, Jonah; and in the common hiſtory of the Jewiſh people, as its being called out of Egypt.

Thirdly, typical ceremonies in the Jewiſh worſhip, as their ſacrifices in general, thoſe of the paſſover and day of expiation in particular, &c. To this head we may alſo refer the typical nature of the high-prieſthood, and of the offices of king, prieſt, and prophet, amongſt the Jews, &c.

Fourthly, the apparently incidental mention of many circumſtances in theſe things, which yet agree ſo exactly, and in a way

way ſo much above chance, with Chriſt, as to make it evident, that they were originally intended to be applied to him. The not breaking a bone of the paſchal lamb; the mention of renting the garment, and caſting lots upon the veſture, by David; of offering gall and vinegar; of looking on him whom they had pierced; of the third day upon numerous occaſions, &c. are circumſtances of this kind.

Now, theſe types and prophecies afford nearly the ſame evidence, whether we conſider the books of the Old Teſtament as genuine, or no. For no one calls in queſtion their being extant as we now have them, ſmall immaterial variations excepted, before the time of Chriſt's appearance. Many of them do indeed require the common hiſtory of the New Teſtament to be allowed as true. But there are ſome, thoſe, for inſtance, which relate to the humiliation and death of Chriſt, and the ſpirituality of his office, the proofs of whoſe accompliſhment are ſufficiently evident to the whole world, even independently of this.

The fourth branch of the prophetical evidences are thoſe which relate to the Chriſtian church. Here the three following particulars deſerve attentive conſideration.

Firſt, the predictions concerning a new and pure religion, which was to be ſet up by the coming of the promiſed Meſſiah.

Secondly, a great and general corruption of this religion, which was to follow in after-times.

Thirdly, The recovery of the Chriſtian church from this corruption, by great tribulations; and the final eſtabliſhment of true and pure religion, called the "the kingdom of righteouſneſs, of the ſaints, "the new Jeruſalem," &c.

The predictions of the firſt and third kinds abound every-where in the old Prophets, in the diſcourſes of Chriſt, and in the writings of the Apoſtles. Thoſe of the ſecond kind are chiefly remarkable in Daniel, the Revelation, and the Epiſtles of St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude. In how ſurpriſing a manner the events of the firſt and ſecond kind have anſwered to the predictions, cannot be unknown to any inquiſitive ſerious perſon, in any Chriſtian country. At the ſame time it is evident, that the predictions of theſe things could have no foundation in probable conjectures when they were given. The events of the third claſs have not yet received their accompliſhment; but there have been for ſome centuries paſt, and are ſtill, perpetual advances and preparations made for them; and it now ſeems unreaſonable to doubt of the natural probability of their accompliſhment, unleſs we doubt at the ſame time of the truth of the religion itſelf, If it be true, it muſt, upon more diligent and impartial examination, both purify itſelf, and overcome all oppoſition.

And it is remarkably agreeable to the tenor of Providence in other things, that that accompliſhment of prophecy, which will hearafter evidence the truth of the Chriſtian Religion in the moſt illuſtrious manner, ſhould be effected by preſent evidences of a leſs illuſtrious nature.

Let me add here, that many of the Pſalms are peculiarly applicable to the reſtoration and converſion of the Jews, and to the final prevalence and eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian church; *i. e.* to the events of the third claſs,

PROP. XVI.

THE DEGREE OF OBSCURITY, WHICH IS FOUND IN THE PROPHECIES OF THE SCRIPTURES, IS NOT SO GREAT AS TO INVALIDATE THE FOREGOING EVIDENCES FOR THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY; BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, IS ITSELF AN INDIRECT TESTIMONY IN THEIR FAVOUR.

IN order to prove this propoſition, I obſerve,

Firſt, That there are a ſufficient number of prophecies, whoſe interpretation is certain, clear, and preciſe, to ſhew that their agreement with the events predicted is far above the powers of chance, or human foreſight. But for the proof of this point, which takes in a great compaſs of literature, I muſt refer to the authors who have treated it in detail. And, as thoſe who have examined this point with accuracy and impartiality, do, as I preſume, univerſally agree to the poſition here laid down; ſo thoſe, who have not done ſo, can have no pretence for aſſerting the contrary; this being an hiſtorical matter, which is to be determined as others of a like kind, *viz.* by the hiſtorical evidences. The reader may, however, form ſome judgement, in the groſs, even from the few inſtances which are alledged under the laſt propoſition.

Secondly, That, even in the types and prophecies where interpreters differ from each other, the differences are often ſo inconſiderable, and the agreements ſo general, or elſe the prophecy ſo ſuited to the ſeveral events to which it is applied by different interpreters, as to exclude both chance and human foreſight, *i. e.* to infer a divine communication. This point requires alſo a careful and candid examination, and then, I think, cannot but be determined in the affirmative; eſpecially when the very great number of types and prophecies is taken into conſideration. Fitneſs in numerous inſtances is always an evidence of deſign; this is a method of reaſoning allowed, explicitly or implicitly, by all. And though the fitneſs may not be perfectly evident or preciſe in all, yet, if it be general, and the inſtances very numerous, the evidence of deſign, ariſing from it, may amount to any degree, and fall ſhort of certainty by an imperceptible difference only. And indeed it is upon theſe principles alone, that we prove the divine power, knowledge, and goodneſs, from the harmonies and mutual fitneſſes of viſible things, and from final cauſes, inaſmuch as theſe harmonies and fitneſſes are preciſely made out only in a few inſtances, if compared to thoſe in which we ſee no more than general harmonies, with particular ſubordinate difficulties, and apparent incongruities.

That the reader may ſee, in a ſtronger light, how fully the fitneſſes, conſidered in the two foregoing paragraphs, exclude chance, and

and infer design, let him try to apply the types and prophecies of the four classes before-mentioned to other persons and events besides those to which Christian interpreters have applied them; and especially let him consider the types and prophecies relating to Christ. If design be excluded, these ought to be equally, or nearly so, applicable to other persons and events; which yet, I think, no serious considerate person can affirm. Now, if chance be once excluded, and the necessity of having recourse to design admitted, we shall be instantly compelled to acknowledge a contrivance greater than human, from the long distances of time intervening between the prophecy and the event, with other such-like reasons.

Thirdly, I observe that those types and prophecies, whose interpretation is so obscure that interpreters have not been able to discover any probable application, cannot any-ways invalidate the evidence arising from the rest. They are analogous to those parts of the works of nature, whose uses, and subserviency to the rest, are not yet understood. And as no one calls in question the evidences of design, which appear in many parts of the human body, because the uses of others are not yet known; so the interpretations of prophecy, which are clearly or probably made out, remain the same evidence of design, notwithstanding that unsurmountable difficulties may hitherto attend many other parts of the prophetic writings.

Fourthly, It is predicted in the prophecies, that in the latter times great multitudes will be converted to the Christian faith; whereas those who preach or prophecy, during the great apostasy, shall be able to do this only in an obscure, imperfect manner, and convert but few. Now the past and present obscurity of prophecy agrees remarkably with this prediction; and the opening, which is already made, since the revival of letters, in applying the prophecies to the events, seems to presage, that the latter times are now approaching; and that, by the more full discovery of the true meaning of the prophetic writings, and of their aptness to signify the events predicted, there will be such an accession of evidence to the divine authority of the Scriptures, as none but the wilfully ignorant, the profligate, and the obdurate, can withstand. It is therefore a confirmation of the prophetic writings, that, by the obscurity of one part of them, a way should be prepared for effecting that glorious conversion of all nations, which is predicted in others, in the time and manner in which it is predicted.

PROP. XVII.

IT IS NO OBJECTION TO THE FOREGOING EVIDENCES TAKEN FROM THE TYPES AND PROPHECIES, THAT THEY HAVE DOUBLE, OR EVEN MANIFOLD, USES AND APPLICATIONS; BUT RATHER A CONFIRMATION OF THEM.

FOR the foregoing evidences all rest upon this foundation, *viz.* that there is an aptness in the types and prophecies to pre-

figure the events, greater than can be ſuppoſed to reſult from chance, or human foreſight. When this is evidently made out from the great number of the types and prophecies, and the degree of clearneſs and preciſeneſs of each; the ſhewing afterwards, that theſe have other uſes and applications, will rather prove the divine interpoſition, than exclude it. All the works of God, the parts of a human body, ſyſtems of minerals, plants, and animals, elementary bodies, planets, fixed ſtars, &c. have various uſes and ſubſerviencies, in reſpect of each other; and, if the Scriptures be the word of God, analogy would lead one to expect ſomething correſponding hereto in them. When men form deſigns, they are indeed obliged to have one thing principally in view, and to ſacrifice ſubordinate matters to principal ones; but we muſt not carry this prejudice, taken from the narrow limits of our power and knowledge, to Him who is infinite in them. All His ends centre in the ſame point, and are carried to their utmoſt perfection by one and the ſame means. Thoſe laws, ceremonies, and incidents, which beſt ſuited the Jewiſh ſtate, and the ſeveral individuals of it, were alſo moſt apt to prefigure the promiſed Meſſiah, and the ſtate of the Chriſtian church, according to the perfect plan of theſe things, which, in our way of ſpeaking, exiſted in the Divine Mind from all eternity; juſt as that magnitude, ſituation, &c. of our earth, which beſt ſuits its preſent inhabitants, is alſo beſt ſuited to all the changes which it muſt hereafter undergo, and to all the inhabitants of other planets, if there be any ſuch, to whom its influence extends.

The following inſtance may perhaps make this matter more clearly underſtood. Suppoſe a perſon to have ten numbers, and as many lines, preſented to his view; and to find by menſuration, that the ten numbers expreſſed the lengths of the ten lines reſpectively. This would make it evident, that they were intended to do ſo. Nor would it alter the caſe, and prove that the agreement between the numbers and lines aroſe without deſign, and by chance, as we expreſs it, to alledge that theſe numbers had ſome other relations; that, for inſtance, they proceeded in arithmetical or geometrical progreſſion, were the ſquares or cubes of other numbers, &c. On the contrary, any ſuch remarkable property would rather increaſe than diminiſh the evidence of deſign in the agreement between the numbers and lines. However, the chief thing to be inquired into would plainly be, whether the agreement be too great to be accounted for by chance. If it be, deſign muſt be admitted.

PROP. XVIII.

THE APPLICATION OF THE TYPES AND PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BY THE WRITERS OF THE NEW DOES NOT WEAKEN THE AUTHORITY OF THESE WRITERS, BUT RATHER CONFIRMS IT.

FOR the objections, which have been made to the writers of the New Teſtament on this head, have been grounded principally upon

upon a ſuppoſition, that when an obvious literal ſenſe of a paſſage, or a manifeſt uſe of a ceremony, ſuited to the then preſent times, are diſcovered, all others are excluded, ſo as to become miſapplications. But this has been ſhewn in the laſt propoſition to be a prejudice ariſing from the narrowneſs of our faculties and abilities. Whence it follows, that, if the Scripture types and prophecies be remarkably ſuited to different things, which is a point that is abundantly proved by learned men, they cannot but, in their original deſign, have various ſenſes and uſes. And it is ſome confirmation of the divine authority of the writers of the New Teſtament, that they write agreeably to this original deſign of God.

It may perhaps afford ſome ſatisfaction to the reader, to make ſome conjectures concerning the light in which the types and prophecies, which have double ſenſes, would appear firſt to the antient Jews, and then to thoſe who lived in the time of our Saviour. From hence we may judge in what light it is reaſonable they ſhould be taken by us.

Let our inſtance be the ſecond Pſalm, which we are to ſuppoſe written by David himſelf, or, at leaſt, in the time of his reign. It is evident, that there are ſo many things in this Pſalm peculiarly applicable to David's aſcent to the throne by God's ſpecial appointment, to the oppoſition which he met with both in his own nation, and from the neighbouring ones, and to his victories over all his oppoſers through the favour of God, that the Jews of that time could not but conſider this Pſalm as relating to David. Nay, one can ſcarce doubt, but the Pſalmiſt himſelf, whether he ſeemed to himſelf to compoſe it from his own proper fund, or to have it dictated immediately by the ſpirit of God, would have David principally in view. At the ſame time it is evident, that there are ſome paſſages, particularly the laſt, "Bleſſed are all they that put their "truſt in him," *i. e.* in the Son, which it would be impious, eſpecially for an Iſraelite, to apply to David, and which therefore no allowance for the ſublimity of the Eaſtern poetry could make applicable. It may be ſuppoſed, therefore, that many, or moſt, conſidered ſuch paſſages as having an obſcurity in them, into which they could no-ways penetrate; whereas a few perhaps, who were peculiarly enlightened by God, and who meditated day and night upon the promiſes made to their anceſtors, particularly upon thoſe to Abraham, would preſume, or conjecture, that a future perſon, of a much higher rank than David, was prefigured thereby. And the caſe would be the ſame in regard to many other Pſalms: they would appear to the perſons of the then preſent times both to reſpect the then preſent occurrences, and alſo to intimate ſome future more glorious ones; and would mutually ſupport this latter interpretation in each other.

When the prophets appeared in the declenſion and captivities of the kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah, the ſame interpretation would be ſtrengthened, and the expectations grounded thereon increaſed, by the plainer and more frequent declarations of the prophets concerning ſuch a future perſon, and the happineſs which would attend his coming. The great and various ſufferings of thoſe choſen peo-

ple, their return and deliverance. their having their Scriptures collected into one view by Ezra, and read in their ſynagogues during the interval from Ezra to Chriſt, the figurative ſenſes put upon dreams, viſions, and parables, in their ſcriptures, &c. would all concur to the ſame purpoſe, till at laſt it is reaſonable to expect, that the Jews in our Saviour's time would conſider many of the inſtitutions and ceremonies of their law, of the hiſtorical events, of the Pſalms appointed for the temple-worſhip, and of the inſpired declaration of the prophets, as reſpecting the future times of the Meſſiah; and this, in ſome caſes, to the excluſion of the more obvious ſenſes and uſes, which had already taken place; being led thereto by the ſame narrow-mindedneſs, which makes ſome in theſe days reject the typical and more remote ſenſe, as ſoon as they ſee the literal and more immediate one. Now, that this was, in fact, the caſe of the Jews in the time of Chriſt, and for ſome time afterwards, appears from the New Teſtament, from the Chriſtian writers of the firſt ages, and from the Talmudical ones.

A great part, however, of the Scripture types and prophecies appeared to the Jews to have no relation to their promiſed Meſſiah till they were interpreted by the event. They expected a perſon that ſhould correſpond to David and Solomon, two glorious princes; but they did not ſee how Iſaac, or the paſchal lamb, ſhould typify him; or that the circumſtance of being called out of Egypt, the appellation of Nazarene, or the parting garments, and caſting lots upon a veſture, ſhould contribute to aſcertain him. However, it is certain, that to perſons who had for ſome time conſidered their Scriptures in the typical, prophetical view mentioned in the laſt paragraph, every remarkable circumſtance and coincidence of this kind, verified by the event, would be a new acceſſion of evidence, provided we ſuppoſe a good foundation from miracles, or prophecies of undoubted import, to have been laid previouſly. Nay, ſuch coincidences may be conſidered not only as arguments to the Jews of Chriſt's time, but as ſolid arguments in themſelves, and that excluſively of the context. For though each of theſe coincidences, ſingly taken, affords only a low degree of evidence, and ſome of them ſcarce any; yet it is a thing not to be accounted for from chance, that ſeparate paſſages of the Old Teſtament ſhould be applicable to the circumſtances of Chriſt's life, by an alluſion either of words or ſenſe, in ten or an hundred times a greater number, than to any other perſons, from mere accident. And this holds in a much higher degree, if the ſeparate paſſages or circumſtances be ſubordinate parts of a general type. Thus the parting the garments, the offering vinegar and gall, and the not breaking a bone, have much more weight, when it is conſidered, that David and the paſchal lamb are types of the Meſſiah. And when the whole evidence of this kind, which the induſtry of pious Chriſtians has brought to light in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, and again ſince the revival of letters, is laid together, it appears to me to be both a full proof of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, and a vindication of the method of arguing from typical and double ſenſes.

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It may be added, in favour of typical reaſoning, that it correſponds to the method of reaſoning by analogy, which is found to be of ſuch extenſive uſe in philoſophy. A type is, indeed, nothing but an analogy; and the ſcripture types are not only a key to the Scriptures, but ſeem alſo to have contributed to put into our hands the key of nature, analogy. And this ſhews us a new correſpondence or analogy between the word and works of God. However, ſince certain well-meaning perſons ſeem to be prejudiced againſt typical and double ſenſes, I will add ſome arguments whereby the writers of the New Teſtament may be defended upon this footing alſo.

Firſt, then, ſince the Jews in the times of the writers of the New Teſtament, and conſequently theſe writers themſelves, were much given to typical reaſonings, and the application of paſſages of the Old Teſtament in a ſecondary ſenſe to the times of the Meſſiah, this would be a common foundation for theſe writers, and thoſe to whom they wrote, to proceed upon, derived from aſſociation, and the acquired nature of their minds. And it is as eaſy to conceive, that God ſhould permit them to proceed upon this foundation for the then preſent time, though it would not extend to the world in general, to diſtant ages, and to perſons of different educations, as that they ſhould be left to the workings of their own acquired natures in many other reſpects, notwithſtanding the ſupernatural gifts beſtowed upon them in ſome; or as it is to conceive, that God ſhould confer any thing, exiſtence, happineſs, &c. in any particular manner or degree.

Secondly, there are ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament quoted from the Old in the way of mere alluſion. This cannot, I think, be true of many, where the paſſage is ſaid to be fulfilled, without doing violence to the natural ſenſe of the words, and of the context, in the New Teſtament: however, where it is, it entirely removes the objection here conſidered.

Thirdly, if we ſhould allow, that the writers of the New Teſtament were ſometimes guilty of erroneous reaſonings in theſe or other matters, ſtill this does not affect their moral characters at all; nor their intellectual ones, which are ſo manifeſt from the general ſoundneſs and ſtrength of their other reaſonings, in any ſuch manner as to be of importance in reſpect of the evidence for the general truth of the Scriptures, or for their divine authority in the firſt and loweſt ſenſe above conſidered.

PROP. XIX.

THE MORAL CHARACTERS OF CHRIST, THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES, PROVE THE TRUTH AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

LET us begin with the conſideration of the character of Chriſt. This, as it may be collected from the plain narrations of the Goſpels, is manifeſtly ſuperior to all other characters, fictitious or real, whether drawn by hiſtorians, orators, or poets. We ſee in it the moſt entire devotion and reſignation to God, and the moſt ardent and univerſal love

love to mankind, joined with the greateſt humility, ſelf-denial, meekneſs, patience, prudence, and every other virtue, divine and human. To which we are to add, that, according to the New Teſtament, Chriſt, being the Lord and Creator of all, took upon himſelf the form of a ſervant, in order to ſave all; that, with this view, he ſubmitted to the helpleſſneſs and infirmities of infancy, to the narrowneſs of human underſtanding, and the perturbations of human affections, to hunger, thirſt, labour, wearineſs, poverty, and hardſhips of various kinds, to lead a ſorrowful, friendleſs life, to be miſunderſtood, betrayed, inſulted, and mocked, and at laſt to be put to a painful and ignominious death; alſo (which deſerves our moſt ſerious conſideration, however incongruous to our narrow apprehenſions it may appear at firſt ſight) to undergo the moſt bitter mental agony previouſly. Here then we may make the following obſervations.

Firſt, that, laying down the preſent diſorders of the moral world and the neceſſity of the love of God and our neighbour, and of ſelf-annihilation, in order to the pure and ultimate happineſs of man, there ſeems to be a neceſſity alſo for a ſuffering Saviour. At leaſt, one may affirm, that the condeſcenſion of Chriſt, in leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and in ſhewing himſelf a perfect pattern of obedience to the will of God, both in doing and ſuffering, has a moſt peculiar tendency to rectify the preſent moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure ſpiritual happineſs. Now it is remarkable, that the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles ſhould have thus hit upon a thing, which all the great men amongſt the antient Heathens miſſed, and which, however clear it does and ought now to appear to us, was a great ſtumbling-block to them, as well as to the Jews; the firſt ſeeking after wiſdom, *i. e.* human philoſophy and eloquence; and the laſt requiring a ſign, or a glorious temporal Saviour. Nor can this be accounted for, as it ſeems to me, but by admitting the reality of the character, *i. e.* the divine miſſion of Chriſt, and the conſequent divine inſpiration of thoſe who drew it, *i. e.* the truth and divine authority of the New Teſtament.

Secondly, if we allow only the truth of the common hiſtory of the New Teſtament, or even without having recourſe to it, only ſuch a part of the character of Chriſt, as neither antient nor modern Jews, Heathens, or Unbelievers, ſeem to conteſt; it will be difficult to reconcile ſo great a character, claiming divine authority, either with the moral attributes of God, or indeed with itſelf, upon the ſuppoſition of the falſehood of that claim. One can ſcarce ſuppoſe, that God would permit a perſon apparently ſo innocent and excellent, ſo qualified to impoſe upon mankind, to make ſo impious and audacious a claim, without having ſome evident mark of impoſture ſet upon him; nor can it be conceived, how a perſon could be apparently ſo innocent and excellent, and yet really otherwiſe.

Thirdly, the manner in which the Evangeliſts ſpeak of Chriſt ſhews that they drew after a real copy; *i. e.* ſhews the genuineneſs

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and truth of the Gospel-history. There are no direct encomiums upon him, no laboured defences or recommendations. His character arises from a careful, impartial examination of all that he said and did, and the Evangelists appear to have drawn this greatest of all characters without any direct design to do it. Nay, they have recorded some things, such as his being moved with the passions of human nature, as well as being affected by its infirmities, which the wisdom of this world would rather have concealed. But their view was, to shew him to the persons to whom they preached as the promised Messiah of the Jews, and the Saviour of mankind; and as they had been convinced of this themselves, from his discourses, actions, sufferings, and resurrection, they thought nothing more was wanting to convince such others as were serious and impartial, but a simple narrative of what Jesus said and did. And if we compare the transcendent greatness of this character with the indirect manner in which it is delivered, and the illiterateness and low condition of the Evangelists, it will appear impossible that they should have forged it, that they should not have had a real original before them, so that nothing was wanting but to record simply and faithfully. How could mean and illiterate persons excel the greatest geniuses, antient and modern, in drawing a character? How came they to draw it in an indirect manner? This is indeed a strong evidence of genuineness and truth; but then it is of so recluse and subtle a nature, and, agreeably to this, has been so little taken notice of by the defenders of the Christian religion, that one cannot conceive the Evangelists were at all aware, that it was an evidence. The character of Christ, as drawn by them, is therefore genuine and true; and consequently proves his divine mission, both by its transcendent excellence, and by his laying claim to such a mission.

Here it ought to be particularly remarked, that our Saviour's entire devotion to God, and sufferings for the sake of men in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection, which was never proposed, or thought of, before his coming (much less attempted or attained); unless as far as this is virtually included in the precepts for loving God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, and other equivalent passages in the Old Testament.

We come, in the next place, to consider the characters of the Prophets, Apostles, and other eminent persons mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. Here then we may observe,

First, that the characters of the persons who are said in the Scriptures to have had divine communications, and a divine mission, are so much superior to the characters which occur in common life, that we can scarce account for the most eminent single ones, and therefore much less for so large a succession of them, continued through so many ages, without allowing the divine communications and assistance, which they alledge. It is true indeed, that many of these eminent persons had considerable imperfections, and some of them were guilty of great sins occasionally, though not habitually. However, I speak here of the balance, after proper deductions are made,

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on account of these sins and imperfections; and leave it to the impartial reader to consider, whether the Prophets, Apostles, &c. were not so much superior, not only to mankind at an average, but even to the best men amongst the Greeks and Romans, as is not fairly to be accounted for by the mere powers of human nature.

Secondly, if this should be doubted, their characters are, however, far too good to allow the supposition of an impious fraud and imposture; which must be the case, if they had not divine authority. We have therefore this double argument for the divine authority of the Scriptures, if we only allow the genuineness and truth of its common history.

Thirdly, the characters of the eminent persons mentioned in the Scriptures arise so much, in an indirect way, from the plain narrations of facts, their sins and imperfections are so fully set forth by themselves, or their friends, with their condemnation and punishment; and the vices of wicked men, and the opposers of God and themselves, related in so candid a way, with all fit allowances; that we have in this a remarkable additional evidence for the truth of this part of the Scripture history, besides the common ones before given, which extend to the whole.

Fourthly, the eminent persons here considered are sometimes charged by unbelievers with crimes, where, all circumstances being duly weighed, they did nothing unjustifiable, nothing more than it was their indispensable duty to God to do; as Abraham in preparing to sacrifice Isaac, Joshua in destroying the Canaanites, &c. We cannot determine an action to be sinful from a mere, abstracted, general definition of it, as that it is the taking away the life of a man, &c. but must carefully weigh all circumstances. And indeed there are no maxims in morality that are quite universal; they can be no more than general; and it is sufficient for human purposes, that they are so much, notwithstanding that the addition of peculiar circumstances makes the action vary from the general rule. Now the certain command of God may surely be such a circumstance.

Lastly, the perfection of virtue being of an ever-growing infinite nature, it is reasonable to expect, that mankind in its infant state, soon after the flood, and so onwards for some time, should be more imperfect, and have less of the pure and sublime precepts concerning indifference to this world, and all present things, universal unlimited charity, mortification, abstinence, chastity, &c. delivered to them, than we Christians have, and less expected from them. And yet, upon the whole, the patriarchs and eminent persons among the Jews were burning and shining lights in their respective generations. However, it is also to be observed here, that the most sublime precepts of the Gospel do appear from the first, in the Old Testament, though under a veil; and that they were gradually opened more and more under the later Prophets.

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PROP. XX.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN THE SCRIPTURES IS AN EVIDENCE OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THIS is an argument which has great force, independently of other conſiderations. Thus let us ſuppoſe, that the author of the Goſpel which goes under St. Matthew's name, was not known; and that it was unſupported by the writers of the primitive times; yet ſuch is the unaffected ſimplicity of the narrations, the purity of the doctrines, and the ſincere piety and goodneſs of the ſentiments, that it carries its own authority with it. And the ſame thing may be ſaid in general of all the books of the Old and New Teſtaments: ſo that it ſeems evident to me, that, if there was no other book in the world beſides the Bible, a man could not reaſonably doubt of the truth of revealed religion. "The mouth ſpeaks from "the abundance of the heart." Mens writings and diſcourſes muſt receive a tincture from their real thoughts, deſires, and deſigns. It is impoſſible to play the hypocrite in every word and expreſſion. This is a matter of common daily obſervation, that cannot be called in queſtion; and the more any one thinks upon it, or attends to what paſſes in himſelf or others, to the hiſtory of the human thoughts, words, and actions, and their neceſſary mutual connexions, *i. e.* to the hiſtory of aſſociation, the more clearly will he ſee it. We may conclude, therefore, even if all other arguments were ſet aſide, that the authors of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, whoever they were, cannot have made a falſe claim to the divine authority.

But there is alſo another method of inferring the divine authority of the Scriptures, from the excellence of the doctrine contained therein. For the Scriptures contain doctrines concerning God, Providence, a future ſtate, the duty of man, *&c.* far more pure and ſublime than can any-ways be accounted for from the natural powers of men, ſo circumſtanced as the ſacred writers were. That the reader may ſee this in a clearer light, let him compare the ſeveral books of the Old and New Teſtaments with the contemporary writers amongſt the Greeks and Romans, who could not have leſs than the natural powers of the human mind; but might have, over and above, ſome traditional hints derived ultimately from revelation. Let him conſider whether it be poſſible to ſuppoſe, that Jewiſh ſhepherds, fiſhermen, *&c.* ſhould, both before and after the riſe of the Heathen philoſophy, ſo far exceed the men of the greateſt abilities and accompliſhments in other nations, by any other means than divine communications. Nay, we may ſay, that no writers, from the invention of letters to the preſent times, are equal to the penmen of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, in true excellence, utility, and dignity; which is ſurely ſuch an internal criterion of their divine authority, as ought not to be

be reſiſted. And perhaps it never is reſiſted by any, who have duly conſidered theſe books, and formed their affections and actions according to the precepts therein delivered.

An objection is ſometimes made againſt the excellence of the doctrines of the Scriptures, by charging upon them erroneous doctrines, eſtabliſhed by the authority of creeds, councils, and particular churches. But this is a manner of proceeding highly unreaſonable. The unbeliever, who pays ſo little regard to the opinions of others, as to reject what all churches receive, the divine miſſion of Chriſt, and the evidences for the truth of the Scriptures, ought not at other times to ſuppoſe the churches, much leſs any particular one, better able to judge of the doctrine; but ſhould in the latter caſe, as well as the firſt, examine for himſelf; or, if he will take the doctrine upon truſt, he ought much rather to take the evidence ſo.

If it can be ſhewn, either that the true doctrine of the Scriptures differs from that which is commonly received, or that reaſon teaches ſomething different from what is commonly ſuppoſed, or, laſtly, that we are inſufficient judges what are the real doctrines of Scripture, or reaſon, or both, and conſequently that we ought to wait with patience for farther light; all objections of this kind fall to the ground. One may alſo add, that the ſame arguments which prove a doctrine to be very abſurd, prove alſo, for the moſt part, that it is not the ſenſe of the paſſage; and that this is a method of reaſoning always allowed in interpreting profane authors.

PROP. XXI.

THE MANY AND GREAT ADVANTAGES WHICH HAVE ACCRUED TO THE WORLD FROM THE PATRIARCHAL, JUDAICAL, AND CHRISTIAN REVELATIONS, PROVE THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THESE advantages are of two ſorts, relating reſpectively to the knowledge and practice of religion. I begin with the firſt.

Now it is very evident, that the Chriſtian Revelation has diffuſed a much more pure and perfect knowledge of what is called natural religion, over a great part of the world, *viz.* where-ever the profeſſion either of Chriſtianity or Mahometiſm prevails. And the ſame thing will appear, in reſpect of the Judaical and Patriarchal revelations, to thoſe who are acquainted with antient hiſtory. It will be found very difficult by ſuch perſons to account even for the Pagan religion, without recurring to ſuch Patriarchal communications with God, as are mentioned in the Pentateuch, and to the more full revelations made to the Jews. So that one is led to believe, that all that is good in any Pagan or falſe religion is of divine original; all that is erroneous and corrupt, the offſpring of the vanity, weakneſs, and wickedneſs of men; and that, properly ſpeaking, we have no reaſon from hiſtory to ſuppoſe, that there ever was any ſuch thing as mere natural religion, *i. e.* any true religion, which men diſcovered

to themſelves by the mere light of nature. Theſe poſitions ſeem to follow from inquiries into the antiquities of the Heathen world, and of their religions. The Heathen religions all appear to be of a derivative nature; each circumſtance in the inquiry confirms the ſcriptural accounts of things, and ſends us to the revelations expreſly mentioned, or indirectly implied, in the Old Teſtament, for the real original of the Pagan religions in their ſimple ſtate. This opinion receives great light and confirmation from Sir Iſaac Newton's Chronology.

It appears alſo very probable to me, that a careful examination of the powers of human underſtanding would confirm the ſame poſition; and that, admitting the novelty of the preſent world, there is no way of accounting for the riſe and progreſs of religious knowledge, as it has taken place in fact, without having recourſe to divine revelation. If we admit the Patriarchal, Judaical, and Chriſtian revelations, the progreſs of natural religion, and of all the falſe pretences to revelation, will fairly ariſe (at leaſt appear poſſible in all caſes, and probable in moſt) from the circumſtance of things, and the powers of human nature; and the foregoing doctrine of aſſociation will caſt ſome light upon the ſubject. If we deny the truth of theſe revelations, and ſuppoſe the Scriptures to be falſe, we ſhall caſt utter confuſion upon the inquiry, and human faculties will be found far unequal to the taſk aſſigned to them.

Secondly, If we conſider the practice of true religion, the good effects of revelation are ſtill more evident. Every man who believes muſt find himſelf either excited to good, or deterred from evil, in many inſtances, by that belief; notwithſtanding that there may be many other inſtances, in which religious motives are too weak to reſtrain violent and corrupt inclinations. The ſame obſervations occur daily with regard to others, in various ways and degrees. And it is by no means concluſive againſt this obvious argument for the good effects of revelation upon the morals of mankind, to alledge, that the world is not better now, than before the coming of Chriſt. This is a point which cannot be determined by any kind of eſtimation, in our power to make; and, if it could, we do not know what circumſtances would have made the world much worſe than it is, had not Chriſtianity interpoſed. However, it does appear to me very probable, to ſay the leaſt, that Jews and Chriſtians, notwithſtanding all their vices and corruptions, have, upon the whole, been always better than Heathens and unbelievers. It ſeems to me alſo, that as the knowledge of true, pure, and perfect religion is advanced and diffuſed more and more every day, ſo the practice of it correſponds thereto: but then this, from the nature of the thing, is a fact of a leſs obvious kind; however, if it be true, it will become manifeſt in due time. Let us ſuppoſe a perſon to maintain, that civil government, the arts of life, medicines, *&c.* have never been of uſe to mankind, becauſe it does not appear from any certain calculation, that the ſum total of health and happineſs is greater among the polite nations, than among the barbarous ones. Would it not be thought

thought a ſufficient anſwer to this, to appeal to the obvious good effects of theſe things in innumerable inſtances, without entering into a calculation impoſſible to be made? However, it does here alſo appear, that, as far as we are able to judge, civilized countries are, upon the whole, in a more happy ſtate than barbarous ones, in all theſe reſpects.

Now, as the divine original of revelation may be directly concluded from its being the ſole fountain of all religious knowledge, if that can be proved; ſo it will follow in an indirect way, if we ſuppoſe, that revelation has only promoted the knowledge and practice of true religion. It is not likely, that folly or deceit of any kind ſhould be eminently ſerviceable in the advancement of wiſdom and virtue. Every tree muſt produce its proper fruit. Enthuſiaſm and impoſture cannot contribute to make man prudent, peaceable and moderate, diſintereſted and ſincere.

PROP. XXII.

THE WONDERFUL NATURE, AND SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE, OF THE ATTEMPT MADE BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES, ARE EVIDENCES OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THIS attempt was that of reforming all mankind, and making them happy in a future ſtate. And, when we conſider firſt the attempt itſelf, and then the aſſurance of ſucceſs in it, which appears in all their words and actions, by ways both direct and indirect, there ariſes from thence alone a ſtrong preſumption in their favour, as well as in favour of the authors of the books of the Old Teſtament, who have concurred in the ſame attempt, though leſs informed of the true nature and full extent of it. For ideas and purpoſes of this kind could ſcarce enter into the hearts of weak or wicked men; much leſs could ſuch perſons enter upon and proſecute ſo great an undertaking with ſuch prudence, integrity, and conſtancy, or form ſuch right judgements both of the oppoſition they ſhould meet with, and of the prevalence of their own endeavours, and thoſe of their ſucceſſors, over this oppoſition. Nay, one may ſay, that nothing leſs than ſupernatural aſſiſtance could qualify them for theſe purpoſes. No deſign of this kind was ever formed, or thought of, till the coming of Chriſt; and the pretences of enthuſiaſts and impoſtors to the ſame commiſſion ſince have all been copied from Chriſt, as being neceſſary to their ſucceeding in any meaſure, ſince his coming. If it be ſuppoſed to be the true interpretation and meaning of the Scriptures, to publiſh final redemption, converſion, and ſalvation to all mankind, even the moſt wicked, in ſome diſtant future ſtate, this will add great force to the preſent argument.

PROP.

PROP. XXIII.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE LOVE OF GOD, AND OF OUR NEIGHBOUR, IS TAUGHT AND INCULCATED IN THE SCRIPTURES, IS AN EVIDENCE OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

FOR it appears, that the Scriptures do virtually include, or even expreſſly aſſert, all that the modern philoſophy has diſcovered or verified concerning theſe important ſubjects; which degree of illumination, as it can with no plauſibility be accounted for in illiterate men in the time of Auguſtus from natural cauſes, ſo much leſs can it in the preceding times from Chriſt up to Moſes. This propoſition is included in the 20th; however, the ſubject of it is of ſo much importance, as to deſerve a ſeparate place.

Here then, firſt, we may obſerve, that Moſes commands the Iſraelites to love God with all the heart, and ſoul, and might, whereas they are to love their neighbours only as themſelves. Now, though this infinite ſuperiority of the love due to God over that due to our neighbour be perfectly agreeable to that infinite majeſty and goodneſs of God, and nothingneſs of the creatures, which every new diſcovery in philoſophy now opens to view; yet it was ſo little known, many ages after Moſes, amongſt the wiſeſt of the Greeks and Romans, that we cannot aſcribe it to his mere natural ſagacity. The natural equality of all men, and the ſelf-annihilation, implied in the precept of loving all our brethen as well as ourſelves, are alſo the genuine dictates of true philoſophy.

Secondly, In order to ſhew the divine authority of the Scriptures, from the manner in which the love of God is taught in them, we muſt conſider not only the direct precepts concerning this love, but alſo all thoſe concerning hope, truſt, fear, thankfulneſs, delight, &c. for all theſe concur to inculcate and beget in us the love of God. The ſame may be ſaid of all the ſcriptural deſcriptions of God and his attributes, and of the addreſs of good men to him, which are there recorded. God is declared in the Scriptures to be light, love, goodneſs, the ſource of all happineſs and perfection, the father and protector of all, &c. And the eminent perſons who compoſed the Pſalms, and other ſuch-like addreſſes to God, appear to have devoted themſelves entirely to him. Now, when we reflect, that there is ſcarce any thing of this kind in the writings of the philoſophers who preceded Chriſt, and nothing comparable to the Scripture expreſſions even in thoſe who came after him; when we farther reflect, that the writings of the ableſt and beſt men of the preſent times contain nothing excellent of the devotional kind, but what may be found in the Scriptures, and even in the Old Teſtament; there ſeems to be a neceſſity for having recourſe to divine inſpiration, as the original ſource of this great degree of illumination in the patriarchs, prophets, and apoſtles.

Thirdly, Good perſons are, in the Scriptures, ſtyled "Children "of God; members of Chriſt; partakers of the divine nature; one

" with God and Chriſt, as Chriſt is with God; members of each " other; heirs of God, and coheirs with Chriſt; heirs of all things," &c. Expreſſions which have the ſtrongeſt tendency to raiſe in us an unbounded love to God, and an equal one to our neighbour, and which include and convey the moſt exalted, and at the ſame time the moſt ſolid, conceptions of this great ſyſtem of things. And if we ſuppoſe, that theſe high titles and privileges are, according to the Scriptures to be hereafter extended to all mankind, the divine original of the Scriptures will receive a new acceſſion of evidence on this account.

PROP. XXIV.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE NECESSARY SUBSERVIENCY OF PAIN TO PLEASURE, UNFOLDED IN THE SCRIPTURES, IS AN EVIDENCE OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THE Scriptures give frequent and ſtrong intimations, that the ultimate happineſs which they promiſe, is not to be obtained in this our degenerate ſtate, but by a previous paſſage through pain. "Bleſſ- " ed are they that mourn. We muſt rejoice in tribulation. The " palm-bearing multitude comes out of great tribulation. The " Captain of our ſalvation," and therefore all his ſoldiers, " muſt be " made perfect through ſufferings. Without ſhedding of blood, there " is no remiſſion of ſins. It is good for us to be afflicted, that we " may learn to keep the commandments of God." The Jews muſt be captivated, and undergo the ſevereſt afflictions, before they can be made happy finally, as the people of God. " Man muſt eat his " bread in the ſweat of his brow all his life, and return to duſt at laſt; " and yet ſtill the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head, " and gain re-admiſſion to the tree of life, whoſe leaves ſhall heal the " nations," &c. &c. Now there is a ſurpriſing correſpondence between ſuch expreſſions as theſe, and many modern diſcoveries, which ſhew that pain is, in general, introductory and ſubſervient to pleaſure; and particularly, that ſuch is the preſent frame of our natures, and conſtitution of the external world, which affects our organs, that we cannot be delivered from the ſenſuality and ſelfiſhneſs that ſeize upon us at our firſt entrance into life, and advanced to ſpirituality and diſintereſtedneſs to the love of God and our neighbour, we cannot have our wills broken, and our faculties exalted and purified, ſo as to reliſh happineſs where-ever we ſee it, but by the perpetual correction and reformation of our judgements and deſires from painful impreſſions and aſſociations. And all philoſophical inquiries of this kind ſeem to caſt a peculiar light and evidence upon the Scripture expreſſions before-mentioned, and to make their accuracy, and congruity with experience and obſervation, be much more plainly ſeen and felt.

PROP.

PROP. XXV.

THE MUTUAL INSTRUMENTALITY OF BEINGS TO EACH OTHER'S HAPPINESS AND MISERY, UNFOLDED IN THE SCRIPTURES, IS AN ARGUMENT OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

TO this head is to be referred all that the Scriptures deliver concerning good and evil angels: Chriſt, the Lord of all, becoming the Redeemer of all; Adam's injuring all his poſterity through his frailty; Abraham's becoming the father of the faithful, and all nations being bleſſed through him; the Jews being the keepers of the oracles of God, and of the true religion; tyrants being ſcourges in the hand of God; the fulneſs of the Gentiles being the occaſion of the final reſtoration of the Jews; and, in general, the doctrine that God prepares and diſpoſes of every thing ſo, as that nothing is for itſelf alone, but every perſon and nation has various relations to others; cooperates with them through Chriſt, "who is the head, and through "whom the whole body being fitly joined together, and compacted "by that which every joint ſupplieth, increaſeth and edifieth itſelf in "love, till all things, both in heaven and earth, arrive, in their "ſeveral orders, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt." Now whoever compares theſe Scripture expreſſions and doctrines with the various mutual relations, ſubſerviencies, and uſes of the parts of the external world, heavenly bodies, meteors, elements, animals, plants, and minerals, to each other, cannot help ſeeing a wonderful analogy between the works of God and the Scriptures, ſo wonderful as juſtly to entitle the laſt to the appellation of "the word of "God."

And thus we may perceive, that the Scripture account of the fall of man, his redemption by Chriſt, and the influences exerted upon him by good and evil angels, is ſo far from affording an objection againſt the Chriſtian religion, that it is a conſiderable evidence for it when viewed in a truly philoſophical light. God works in every thing by means, by thoſe which, according to our preſent language and ſhort-ſightedneſs, are termed bad and unfit, as well as by the good and evidently fit ones; and all theſe means require a definite time, before they can accompliſh their reſpective ends. This occurs to daily obſervation in the courſe and conſtitution of nature. And the Scripture doctrines concerning the fall, the redemption by Chriſt, and the influences of good and evil angels, are only ſuch intimations concerning the principal inviſible means that lead man to his ultimate end, happineſs in being united to God, as accelerate him in his progreſs thither. According to the Scriptures, Adam hurts all, through frailty; Chriſt ſaves all, from his love and compaſſion to all; evil angels tempt, through malice; and good ones aſſiſt and defend, in obedience to the will of God, and his original and ultimate deſign of making all happy. Theſe things are indeed cloathed in a conſiderable variety of expreſſions, ſuited to our preſent ways of acting, conceiving, and ſpeaking (which ways are, however, all of

divine original, God having taught mankind, in the patriarchal times, the language, as one may ſay, in which he ſpake to them then and afterwards); but theſe expreſſions can have no greater real import, than that of ſignifying to us the means made uſe of by God; he being, according to the Scriptures, as well as reaſon, the one only real agent in all the tranſactions that relate to man, to angels, &c. And to object to the method of producing happineſs by this or that means, becauſe of the time required to accompliſh the end, of the mixture of evil, &c. is to require, that all God's creatures ſhould at once be created infinitely happy, or rather have exiſted ſo from all eternity, *i. e.* ſhould be Gods, and not creatures.

PROP. XXVI.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES MAY BE INFERRED FROM THE SUPERIOR WISDOM OF THE JEWISH LAWS, CONSIDERED IN A POLITICAL LIGHT, AND FROM THE EXQUISITE WORKMANSHIP SHEWN IN THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE.

ALL theſe were originals amongſt the Jews, and ſome of them were copied partially and imperfectly by antient Heathen nations. They ſeem alſo to imply a knowledge ſuperior to the reſpective times. And I believe, that profane hiſtory gives ſufficient atteſtation to theſe poſitions. However, it is certain from Scripture, that Moſes received the whole body of his laws, alſo the pattern of the tabernacle, and David the pattern of the temple, from God; and that Bezaleel was inſpired by God for the workmanſhip of the tabernacle. Which things, being laid down as a ſure foundation, may encourage learned men to inquire into the evidences from profane hiſtory, that the knowledge and ſkill to be found amongſt the Jews were ſuperior to thoſe of other nations at the ſame period of time, *i. e.* were ſupernatural.

PROP. XXVII.

THE WANT OF UNIVERSALITY IN THE PUBLICATION OF REVEALED RELIGION IS NO OBJECTION TO IT; BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, THE TIME AND MANNER, IN WHICH THE SCRIPTURES WERE WRITTEN, AND DELIVERED TO THE WORLD, ARE ARGUMENTS FOR THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

HERE I obſerve,

Firſt, That objections of this kind ought never to be admitted againſt hiſtorical evidence; and, in fact, are not upon other ſubjects. It is evident, as was obſerved in the beginning of this chapter, that to allow the truth of the Scripture hiſtory, is to allow the truth of the Chriſtian religion. Now it is very foreign to the purpoſe of an inquiry into the truth of the Scripture hiſtory, to allege that it has not been made known to all mankind in all ages, and under all circumſtances of each individual. It muſt require much abſtracted and ſubtle reaſoning, and ſuch as can never be put in competition with plain hiſtorical evidence, to connect this objection with the propoſition

propoſition objected to. This is therefore, at leaſt, a ſtrong preſumption againſt the validity of ſuch an objection.

Secondly, This objection ſeems to derive its whole force from ſuch poſitions relating to the moral attributes of God, as make it neceſſary for us to ſuppoſe, either that he deals with all his creatures at preſent in an equally favourable manner, or, at leaſt, that nothing ſhall be ultimately wanting to their happineſs. Now the firſt ſuppoſition appears, upon the moſt tranſient view which we take of things, to be utterly falſe. There are differences of all degrees at preſent, in reſpect of all the good things which God has given us to enjoy; and therefore may be in the beſt of all good things, revealed religion. And indeed, if it was otherwiſe in reſpect of revealed religion, one ſtrong argument in its favour would be wanting, *viz.* its analogy with the courſe of nature. The moral attributes of God are to be deduced from obſervations made upon the courſe of nature. If, therefore, the tenor of revelation be agreeable to that of nature, it muſt be ſo to the moral attributes of God. But if any one ſuppoſes, in the ſecond place, that, notwithſtanding preſent and apparent differences in the circumſtances of God's creatures, there are no real and ultimate ones; at leaſt, that the balance will ultimately be in favour of each individual finitely, or perhaps infinitely; I anſwer, that this ſuppoſition is as agreeable to revelation as to natural reaſon; that there are as probable evidences for it in the word of God, as in his works, there being "no acceptance of perſons with God, no difference "between the Jew and the Gentile," according to the Scriptures; and that we may infer as ſtrongly from the Scriptures, that Chriſt will ſave all, as it can be inferred from philoſophy, that all will be made happy in any way; both which poſitions I ſhall endeavour to eſtabliſh hereafter, with the mutual illuſtrations and confirmations, which theſe glorious doctrines of natural and revealed religion afford to each other. And the gradual diffuſion of the Patriarchal, Judaical, and Chriſtian revelations, compared with the prophecies relating to the future kingdom of Chriſt, and with the preſent circumſtances of things, will afford great ſatisfaction and joy to every pious, benevolent perſon, who inquires into this ſubject. Theſe conſiderations will incline him to believe, that the Goſpel will, ſooner or later, be preached to "every creature in Heaven, in Earth, under "the Earth, &c." and not only preached, but received, obeyed, and made the means of unſpeakable happineſs to them. And thus this objection will be removed, not only in ſpeculation, and according to reaſon, but, in fact, from the preſent unhappy objectors; and "they "will look on him whom they have pierced."

Thirdly, having ſhewn that a gradual and partial promulgation is not inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of a true revelation, we may farther affirm, that the particular time and manner, in which the ſeveral Patriarchal, Judaical, and Chriſtian revelations have been publiſhed to the world, are even arguments in their favour. This ſubject has been well handled by various learned men, particularly by Mr. Arch. Law, in his "Conſiderations on the ſtate of the world,"

&c. Theſe gentlemen have ſhewn, that, *cæteris manentibus*, which is in theſe things always to be previouſly allowed, the diſpenſations recorded in the Scriptures have been, as far as we can judge, perfectly ſuited to the ſtates of the world at the times when theſe diſpenſations were made reſpectively; *i. e.* to the improvement of mankind in knowledge ſpeculative and practical, to their wants, and to their ability to profit in moral accompliſhments; ſo that if we ſuppoſe either much more, or much leſs, light to have been afforded to mankind in a ſupernatural way (*cæteris manentibus*; and particularly their voluntary powers over their affections and actions, or free-will in the practical ſenſe, remaining the ſame), their advancement in moral perfection, in voluntry obedience to, and pure love of God, would probably have been leſs: which ſuitableneſs of each revelation to the time when it was made, and to the production of the *Maximum* of moral perfection, is an argument for the ſyſtem of revelation, of the ſame kind with thoſe for the goodneſs of God, which are drawn from the mutual fitneſſes of the finite and imperfect parts of the natural world to each other, and to the production of the *Maximum*, or greateſt poſſible quantity, of happineſs.

PROP. XXVIII.

THE EXCLUSION OF ALL GREAT DEGREES OF ENTHUSIASM AND IMPOSTURE FROM THE CHARACTERS OF CHRIST, THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES, PROVES THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THAT Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, cannot be charged with any great degrees of enthuſiaſm or impoſture, ſeems allowed by many unbelievers; and is evident from the firſt view of their diſcourſes and writings, and of hiſtory ſacred and profane. We might ſay, that much more is evident. However, for the preſent, let us only ſuppoſe all great degrees of enthuſiaſm and impoſture excluded, and inquire how far their divine miſſion may be inferred from that ſuppoſition.

Firſt, then, if all great degrees of enthuſiaſm be excluded, Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, muſt know whether or no they were under the influence of the divine ſpirit, ſo as to propheſy, ſpeak, and interpret languages which they had never learnt, and work miracles. Indeed to ſuppoſe them not capable of diſtinguiſhing theſe powers in themſelves and each other, is to charge them with downright madneſs.

Secondly, ſince then they claimed theſe powers every-where, as the ſeal of their commiſſion from God; if they had them not, *i. e.* if they had not divine authority, they muſt be impoſtors, and endeavour to deceive the world knowingly and deliberately. And this impoſture, whether we conſider the affront offered to God, or the injury done to mankind, or its duration, its audaciouſneſs, &c. would be the deepeſt and blackeſt that has ever appeared in the world. It is therefore excluded by ſuppoſition; and conſequently, ſince a leſs degree will not account for a falſe claim to divine authority,

thority, we muſt allow that Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, made a true one.

Thirdly, let it be obſerved, that though cautious unbelievers do not venture to charge Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, either with groſs enthuſiaſm, or abandoned impoſture, in expreſs terms; yet they find themſelves obliged to inſinuate both, in all their attacks upon Revealed Religion: Which is, in effect, to acknowledge the truth of the preſent propoſition; for it is the ſame thing as to acknowlege, that both the charge of groſs enthuſiaſm, and that of abandoned impoſture, are neceſſary to ſupport the objections againſt Revealed Religion. Now, as neither charge, ſingly taken, can be maintained; ſo both together are inconſiſtent. Groſs enthuſiaſm does not admit that conſtant caution, and cool diſpaſſionate cunning, which abandoned impoſture ſuppoſes and requires in order to ſucceed.

PROP. XXIX.

THE RECEPTION WHICH CHRIST, HIS FORERUNNERS AND FOLLOWERS, WITH THEIR DOCTRINES, HAVE MET WITH IN ALL AGES, IS AN ARGUMENT OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THIS evidence does, as it were, embrace all the others, and give a particular force to them. For it will be a ſtrong confirmation of all the evidences for the Jewiſh and Chriſtian religions, if we can ſhew, that the perſons to whom they have been offered have been influenced by them as much as there was reaſon to expect, admitting them to be true; and far more than could be expected, on ſuppoſition that they were falſe. The moſt illuſtrious inſtance of this, is the victory which the Chriſtian miracles and doctrines, with the ſufferings of our Saviour and his followers, gained over the whole powers, firſt, of the Jewiſh ſtate, and then of the Roman empire, in the primitive times. For here all ranks and kinds of men, princes, prieſts, Jewiſh and Heathen philoſophers, populace, with all their aſſociated prejudices from cuſtom and education, with all their corrupt paſſions and luſts, with all the external advantages of learning, power, riches, honour, and, in ſhort, with every thing but truth, endeavoured to ſuppreſs the progreſs that Chriſt's religion made every day in the world; but were unable to do it. Yet ſtill the evidence was but of a limited nature; it required to be ſet forth, atteſted, and explained by the preacher, and to be attended to, and reflected upon, with ſome degree of impartiality, by the hearer: and therefore, though the progreſs of it was quick, and the effect general, yet they were not inſtantaneous and univerſal. However, it is very evident, that any fraud, or falſe pretence, muſt ſoon have yielded to ſo great an oppoſition ſo circumſtanced.

The efficacy which the Chriſtian doctrine then had in reforming the lives of many thouſands, is here to be conſidered as a principal branch of this argument, it being evidently the moſt difficult of all things, to convert men from vicious habits to virtuous ones, as

every one may judge from what he feels in himelf, as well as from what he ſees in others; and whatever does this cannot, as it ſeems to me, but come from God. The falſe religions, and various corruptions of the true, which have from time to time appeared in the world, have been enabled to do this in the imperfect manner in which they have done it, merely, as it ſeems to me, from that mixture of important truths, and good motives, which they have borrowed from real revelations, Patriarchal, Judaical, and Chriſtian.

In like manner as the propagation of Chriſtianity, upon its firſt appearance in the world, evinces its divine original, ſo does the progreſs it has ſince made, and the reception which it meets with at preſent, amongſt the ſeveral ranks and orders of men. The detail of this would run out to a great length. It may, however, be of ſome uſe juſt to obſerve, that, notwithſtanding the great prevalence of Infidelity in the preſent times, it is ſeldom found to conſiſt with an accurate knowledge of ancient hiſtory, ſacred and profane, and never with an exalted piety and devotion to God.

And it is as peculiarly for the credit of Chriſtianity, that it ſhould now be ſupported by the learned, as that it was firſt propagated by the unlearned; and an inconteſtable evidence for it, as appears to me, that it has been univerſally embraced by all eminently pious perſons, to whom it has been made known in a proper manner.

The analogous obſervations may be made upon the reception which the Jewiſh religion met with both from the Jews themſelves, and from the neighbouring nations. It ſeems impoſſible for Moſes to have delivered the Jews from their oppreſſion in Egypt, and afterwards to have ſubjected them to his laws, for Joſhua to have conquered Canaan, for the religion to have ſubſiſted in the ſucceeding times of the Judges and Kings, for the prieſts and prophets to have maintained their authority, for the people to have returned, after their captivity, with their religion in an uncorrupted ſtate, and to have ſupported it and themſelves againſt the kings of Syria and Egypt, and the power of the Romans, and to remain at this day a ſeparate people diſperſed all over the world, according to the prophecies, unleſs the miraculous part of the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament be allowed to be true, as well as the other.

PROP. XXX.

THE RECEPTION WHICH FALSE RELIGIONS HAVE MET WITH IN THE WORLD, ARE ARGUMENTS OF THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN.

I will here make a few ſhort remarks,

Firſt, upon the polytheiſtical, idolatrous religion of the antient world.

Secondly, upon the religious inſtitutions of Zoroaſter.

Thirdly, upon the impoſture of Mahomet.

Fourthly, upon the Enthuſiaſtical ſects, which have appeared from time to time amongſt Chriſtians.

All these seem to have met with such success, as might be expected from the mixture of truth and falsehood in them, compared with the then circumstances of things. They are therefore indirect evidences for the truth of the Christian religion, since this has met with such success, as cannot be reconciled to the circumstances of things, unless we suppose it true.

And, first, the antient Pagan religions seem evidently to be the degenerated offspring of the patriarchal revelations; and so far to have been true, as they taught a God, a providence, a future state, supernatural communications made to particular persons, especially in the infancy of the world, the present corruption of man, and his deviation from a pure and perfect way, the hopes of a pardon, a mediatorial power, the duties of sacrifice, prayer, and praise, and the virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. They were false, as they mixed and polluted these important truths with numberless fables, superstitions, and impieties. That degree of truth, and moral excellence, which remained in them, was a principal cause of their success, and easy propagation among the people; for their moral sense would direct them to approve and receive what was fit and useful. And, had the people of those times penetrated sufficiently into the powers of the human mind, they might have concluded, that religious truths could not be of human invention. However, as the impressions, which the historical and prophetical evidences for the patriarchal revelations had made upon mankind, were not yet obliterated; they believed, upon the authority of tradition, that all important knowledge, especially in sacred matters, was of divine original.

As to the miracles said to be wrought upon certain occasions in Pagan nations, we may make these two remarks; first, that the evidence for these is far inferior to that for the Jewish and Christian miracles; so that these may be true, though those be false. Secondly, that we are not sufficiently informed of the ways of Providence, to infer that God did not permit, or cause some miracles to be wrought, even in times and places where great corruption prevailed. Divine communications and miracles were probably most common soon after the flood, in the infancy of mankind. Afterwards, as they advanced towards adult age, these supernatural interpositions grew more rare (unless upon singular occasions, as upon the publication of the Law by Moses, and of the Gospel by Christ; at which times, many and great miracles succeeded each other at short intervals, in order to command awe, attention, and belief); and it may be, that they ceased in the Pagan world for some ages before Christ; or it may be otherwise; and that, in rare and extraordinary cases, the hand of God appeared in a miraculous manner. Analogy favours the last opinion, as it seems to me; which also appears to be more countenanced by history than the contrary one; and yet the pretences to miracles amongst the Pagans were undoubtedly false in the general.

I come,

I come, in the ſecond place, to conſider the religious inſtitutions of Zoroaſter. We have not ſo full and authentic an hiſtory of theſe, as to compare them properly with the Jewiſh or Chriſtian revelations. If we ſuppoſe, that Zoroaſter and Hyſtaſpes ſet up the worſhip of one God, in a ſimple manner, teaching and inculcating the practice of virtue at the ſame time, this religion may be ſaid to have conſiderable moral evidence in its favour. If, farther, we ſuppoſe it to be in part derived, either from the deſcendants of Abraham by Keturah, called Brachmans from him, or from that knowledge of the true God, which the ten tribes, and the Jews, had then communicated to that part of the world, it will become an evidence for the Jewiſh religion.

Thirdly, the religion of Mahomet allows and preſuppoſes the truth of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian. Its rapid propagation was owing chiefly to the mixture of political intereſts. That part of its doctrines, which is good, is manifeſtly taken from the Scriptures; and this contributed to its ſucceſs. However, a compariſon of Mahometiſm with Chriſtianity, in the ſeveral particulars of each, ſeems to ſhew, that whenever a ſtrict examination is made into the hiſtory of Mahometiſm by its profeſſors, the falſehood of it will quickly be made evident to them. It could not ſtand ſuch a trial as Chriſtianity has, ſince the revival of learning in theſe Weſtern parts.

It ſeems eaſy to apply what has been delivered in the three laſt paragraphs to the analogous particulars of the religion of Confucius, and of other religions found in the Eaſt and Weſt-Indies, as far as their hiſtories are ſufficiently full and authentic for that purpoſe.

Laſtly, one may make the following remarks with reſpect to the ſeveral enthuſiaſtic ſects that ariſe from time to time amongſt Chriſtians.

Firſt, that their pretences to miracles and prophecies have, in general, been detected and expoſed, after ſome examination and inquiry; unleſs the ſect has begun to decline from other cauſes, before a ſtrict examination became neceſſary.

Secondly, that their pretended miracles were not of that evident kind, nor done in the ſame open manner, &c. as the Jewiſh and Chriſtian miracles.

Thirdly, that theſe pretended miracles have not produced laſting effects upon the minds of men, like the Jewiſh and Chriſtian. Now, though a religion may ſucceed for a time without true miracles, yet it ſeems hard to believe, that any ſhould fail with them.

Fourthly, the ſucceſs of ſects has in general been owing to their making greater pretences to purity and Goſpel perfection than eſtabliſhed churches, and to their both teaching and practiſing ſome neceſſary duties, which eſtabliſhed churches have too much neglected in the corrupted ſtate of Chriſtianity. And in this light they have been true in part, and have done the moſt important ſervice to the world. Every ſect of Chriſtians has magnified ſome great truth, not above its real value, but above the value which other ſects have ſet upon it; and by this means each important religious truth

truth has had the advantage of being ſet in a full light by ſome party or other, though too much neglected by the reſt. And the true Catholic church and communion of ſaints unites all theſe ſects, by taking what is right from each, and leaving the errors, falſehoods, and corruptions of each, to combat and deſtroy one another.

And it may be, that mankind will be able in future generations to ſee, how every other ſect, and pretence to revelation, beſides thoſe of enthuſiaſtic Chriſtians, in whatever age or country it has appeared, has been, all other things remaining the ſame, ſuited in the beſt poſſible manner, both to particular and general purpoſes; and that each has prepared the way, in its proper place, for that more complete ſtate predicted in the Scriptures under the titles of "the "kingdom of Heaven," and "of righteouſneſs, of the new Jeru- "ſalem," &c. Even infidelity, atheiſm, and ſcepticiſm, have their uſe. The veſſels of wrath are ſtill veſſels belonging to the Maker and Lord of all things, and anſwering his infinitely beneficent purpoſes. "Offences muſt come," though "woe be to thoſe by whom they "come!" Each ſect, and pretence, and objection, has given, or will give, way in its time. The true and pure religion of Chriſt alone grows more evident and powerful from every attack that is made upon it, and converts the bitterneſs and poiſon of its adverſaries into noriſhment for itſelf, and an univerſal remedy for the pains and ſorrows of a miſerable, degenerate world.

THE

THE

EVIDENCES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Section I.

I. *General diviſion of the following diſcourſe, with regard to Pagan and Jewiſh authors, who mention particulars relating to our Saviour.*

II. *Not probable that any ſuch ſhould be mentioned by Pagan writers who lived at the ſame time, from the nature of ſuch tranſactions,*

III. *Eſpecially when related by the Jews:*

IV. *And heard at a diſtance by thoſe who pretend to as great miracles of their own.*

V. *Beſides that, no Pagan writers of that age lived in Judæa, or its confines;*

VI. *And becauſe many books of that age are loſt.*

VII. *An inſtance of one record proved to be authentick.*

VIII. *A ſecond record of probable, though not undoubted authority,*

I. THAT I may lay before you a full ſtate of the ſubject under our conſideration, and methodize the ſeveral particulars that I touched upon in diſcourſe with you; I ſhall firſt take notice of ſuch Pagan authors as have given their teſtimony to the hiſtory of our Saviour; reduce theſe authors under their reſpective claſſes, and ſhew what authority their teſtimonies carry with them. Secondly, I ſhall take notice of Jewiſh authors in the ſame light *.

II. there are many reaſons, why you ſhould not expect that matters of ſuch a wonderful nature ſhould be taken notice of by thoſe eminent Pagan writers, who were contemporaries with Jeſus Chriſt, or by thoſe who lived before his diſciples had perſonally appeared among them, and aſcertained the report which had gone abroad concerning a life ſo full of miracles.

Suppoſing ſuch things had happened at this day in Switzerland, or among the Griſons, who make a greater figure in Europe than Judæa did in the Roman Empire, would they be immediately believed by thoſe who live at a great diſtance from them? or would any certain account of them be tranſmitted into foreign countries, within ſo ſhort a ſpace of time as that of our Saviour's publick miniſtry? Such

* The author did not live to write this ſecond part.

kinds

kinds of news, though never ſo ture, ſeldom gain credit, till ſome time after they are tranſacted and expoſed to the examination of the curious, who, by laying together circumſtances, atteſtations, and characters of thoſe who are concerned in them, either receive, or reject, what at firſt none but eye-witneſſes could abſolutely believe or diſbelieve. In a caſe of this ſort, it was natural for men of ſenſe and learning to treat the whole account as fabulous, or, at fartheſt, to ſuſpend their belief of it, until all things ſtood together in their full light,

III. Beſides, the Jews were branded not only for ſuperſtitions different from all the religions of the Pagan world, but in a particular manner ridiculed for being a credulous people; ſo that whatever reports of ſuch a nature came out of that country, were looked upon by the heathen world as falſe, frivolous, and improbable.

IV. We may further obſerve, that the ordinary practice of magick in thoſe times, with the many pretended prodigies, divinations, apparitions, and local miracles among the Heathens, made them leſs attentive to ſuch news from Judæa, till they had time to conſider the nature, the occaſion, and the end of our Saviour's miracles, and were awakened by many ſurprizing events to allow them any conſideration at all.

V. We are indeed told by St, Matthew, that the fame of our Saviour, during his life, went throughout all Syria, and that there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, Judæa, Decapolis, Idumæa, from beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. Now, had there been any hiſtorians of thoſe times and places, we might have expected to have ſeen in them ſome account of thoſe wonderful tranſactions in Judæa; but there is not any ſingle author extant, in any kind, of that age, in any of thoſe countries.

VI. How many books have periſhed, in which poſſibly there might have been mention of our Saviour! Look among the Romans, how few of their writings are come down to our times! In the ſpace of two hundred years from our Saviour's birth, when there was ſuch a multitude of writers in all kinds, how ſmall is the number of authors that have made their way to the preſent age!

VII. One authentic record, and that the moſt authentic heathen record, we are pretty ſure, is loſt. I mean, the account ſent by the governor of Judæa, under whom our Saviour was judged, condemned, and crucified. It was the cuſtom of the Roman empire, as it is to this day in all the governments of the world, for the præfects and viceroys of diſtant provinces to tranſmit to their Sovereign a ſummary relation of every thing remarkable in their adminiſtration. That Pontius Pilate, in his account, would have touched on ſo extraordinary an event in Judæa, is not to be doubted; and that he actually did, we learn from Juſtin Martyr. who lived about a hundred years after our Saviour's death, reſided, made converts, and ſuffered martyrdom at Rome, where he was engaged with philoſophers, and in a particular manner with Creſcens the Cynick, who could eaſily have detected, and would not fail to have expoſed him, had he

he quoted a record not in being, or made any falſe citation out of it. Would the great apologiſt have challenged Creſcens to diſpute the cauſe of Chriſtianity with him before the Roman ſenate, had he forged ſuch an evidence? or would Creſcens have refuſed the challenge, could he have triumphed over him in the detection of ſuch a forgery? To which we muſt add, that the apology, which appeals to this record, was preſented to a learned emperor, and to the whole body of the Roman ſenate. This father, in this apology, ſpeaking of the death and ſufferings of our Saviour, refers the emperor for the truth of what he ſays to the acts of Pontius Pilate, which I have here mentioned. Tertullian, who wrote his apology about fifty years after Juſtin, doubtleſs referred to the ſame record, when he tells the governor of Rome, that the emperor Tiberius having received an account out of Paleſtine in Syria of the divine perſon who had appeared in that country, paid him a particular regard, and threatened to puniſh any who ſhould accuſe the Chriſtians; nay, that the emperor would have adopted him among the deities whom he worſhiped, had not the ſenate refuſed to come into the propoſal. Tertullian, who gives us this hiſtory, was not only one of the moſt learned men of his age, but, what adds a greater weight to his authority in this caſe, was eminently ſkillful and well read in the laws of the Roman empire. Nor can it be ſaid, that Tertullian grounded his quotation upon the authority of Juſtin Martyr, becauſe we find he mixes it with matters of fact which are not related by that author. Euſebius mentions the ſame ancient record; but, as it was not extant in his time, I ſhall not inſiſt upon his authority in this point. If it be objected that this particular is not mentioned in any Roman hiſtorian, I ſhall uſe the ſame argument in a parallel caſe, and ſee whether it will carry any force with it. Ulpian, the great Roman lawyer, gathered together all the imperial edicts that had been made againſt the Chriſtians. But did any one ever ſay that there had been no ſuch edicts, becauſe they were not mentioned in the hiſtories of thoſe emperors? Beſides, who knows but this circumſtance of Tiberius was mentioned in other hiſtorians that have been loſt, though not to be found in any ſtill extant? Has not Suetonius many particulars of this emperor omitted by Tacitus, and Herodian many that are not ſo much as hinted at by either? As for the ſpurious acts of Pilate, now extant, we know the occaſion and time of their writing; and, had there not been a true and authentic record of this nature, they would never have been forged.

VIII. The ſtory of Agbarus, king of Edeſſa, relating to the letter which he ſent to our Saviour, and to that which he received from him, is a record of great authority; and though I will not inſiſt upon it, may venture to ſay, that, had we ſuch an evidence for any fact in Pagan hiſtory, an author would be thought very unreaſonable who ſhould reject it. I believe you will be of my opinion, if you will peruſe, with other authors, who have appeared in vindication of theſe letters as genuine, the additional arguments which have been made uſe of by the late famous and learned Dr. Grabe, in the ſecond volume of his "Spicilegium."

SECTION

Section II.

I. *What facts in the history of our Saviour might be taken notice of by Pagan authors.*

II. *What particular facts are taken notice of, and by what Pagan authors.*

III. *How Celsus represented our Saviour's miracles.*

IV. *The same representation made of them by other unbelievers, and proved unreasonable.*

V. *What facts in our Saviour's history not to be expected from Pagan writers.*

I. WE now come to consider what undoubted authorities are extant among the Pagan writers; and here we must premise, that some parts of our Saviour's history may be reasonably expected from Pagans. I mean, such parts as might be known to those who lived at a distance from Judæa, as well as to those who were the followers and eye-witnesses of Christ.

II. Such particulars are most of these which follow, and which are all attested by some one or other of those heathen authors, who lived in or near the age of our Saviour and his disciples. 'That 'Augustus Cæsar had ordered the whole empire to be censed or taxed,' which brought our Saviour's reputed parents to Bethlehem: this is mentioned by several Roman historians, as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion. 'That a great light, or a new star, appeared in the East, 'which directed the wise men to our Saviour:' this is recorded by Chalcidius. 'That Herod, the king of Palestine, so often men-'tioned in the Roman history, made a great slaughter of innocent 'children,' being so jealous of his successor, that he put to death his own sons on that account. This character of him is given by several historians; and this cruel fact mentioned by Macrobius, a Heathen author, who tells it as a known thing, without any mark or doubt upon it. 'That our Saviour had been in Egypt.' This Celsus, though he raises a monstrous story upon it, is so far from denying, that he tells us our Saviour learned the arts of magic in that country. 'That Pontius Pilate was governor of Judæa; that our 'Saviour was brought in judgement before him, and by him con-'demned and crucified.' This is recorded by Tacitus. 'That many 'miraculous cures, and works out of the ordinary course of nature, 'were wrought by him:' this is confessed by Julian the Apostate, Porphyry, and Hierocles, all of them not only Pagans, but professed enemies and persecutors of Christianity. 'That our Saviour 'foretold several things which came to pass according to his predic-'tions:' this was attested by Phlegon, in his annals, as we are assured by the learned Origen against Celsus. 'That, at the time when 'our Saviour died, there was a miraculous darkness and a great earth-'quake:' this is recorded by the same Phlegon the Trallian, who was likewise a Pagan, and freeman to Adrian the emperor. We may here observe, that a native of Trallium, which was not situate at so great a distance from Palestine, might very probably be informed of

ſuch remarkable events as had paſſed among the Jews in the age immediately preceding his own times, ſince ſeveral of his countrymen, with whom he had converſed, might have received a confuſed report of our Saviour before his crucifixion, and probably lived within the ſhake of the earthquake, and the ſhadow of the eclipſe, which are recorded by this author. 'That Chriſt was worſhiped as a God 'among the Chriſtians, that they would rather ſuffer death than 'blaſpheme him; that they received a ſacrament, and by it entered 'into a vow of abſtaining from ſin and wickedneſs;' conforming to the advice given by St. Paul; 'that they had private aſſemblies of 'worſhip, and uſed to join together in hymns:' this is the account which Pliny the younger gives of Chriſtianity in his days, about ſeventy years after the death of Chriſt, and which agrees in all its circumſtances with the accouts we have in Holy Writ, of the firſt ſtate of Chriſtianity after the crucifixion of our bleſſed Saviour. 'That 'St. Peter, whoſe miracles are many of them recorded in Holy Writ, 'did many wonderful works,' is owned by Julian the Apoſtate, who therefore repreſents him as a great magician, and one who had in his poſſeſſion a book of magical ſecrets, left him by our Saviour. 'That the devils or evil ſpirits were ſubject to them,' we may learn from Porphyry, who objects to Chriſtianity, that, ſince Jeſus had begun to be worſhiped, Æſculapius and the reſt of the Gods did no more converſe with men. Nay, Celſus himſelf affirms the ſame thing in effect, when he ſays, that the power which ſeemed to reſide in Chriſtians proceeded from the uſe of certain names, and the invocation of certain dæmons. Origen remarks on this paſſage, that the author doubtleſs hints at thoſe Chriſtians who put to flight evil ſpirits, and healed thoſe who where poſſeſſed with them; a fact which had been often ſeen, and which he himſelf had ſeen, as he declares in another part of his diſcourſe againſt Celſus; but at the ſame time aſſures us, that this miraculous power was exerted by the uſe of no other name but that of Jeſus, to which were added ſeveral paſſages in his hiſtory, but nothing like any invocation to dæmons.

III. Celſus was ſo hard ſet with the report of our Saviour's miracles, and the confident atteſtations concerning him, that though he often intimates he did not believe them to be true, yet, knowing he might be ſilenced in ſuch an anſwer, provides himſelf with another retreat, when beaten out of this; namely, that our Saviour was a magician. Thus he compares the feeding of ſo many thouſands at two different times with a few loaves and fiſhes, to the magical feaſts of thoſe Egyptian impoſtors, who would preſent their ſpectators with viſionary entertainments, that had in them neither ſubſtance nor reality: which, by the way, is to ſuppoſe, that a hungry and fainting multitude were filled by an apparition, or ſtrengthened and refreſhed with ſhadows. He knew very well that there were ſo many witneſſes and actors, if I may call them ſuch, in theſe two miracles, that it was impoſſible to refute ſuch multitudes, who had doubtleſs ſufficiently ſpread the fame of them, and was therefore in

this

this place forced to resort to the other solution, that it was done by magic. It was not enough to say, that a miracle which appeared to so many thousand eye-witnesses was a forgery of Christ's disciples; and therefore, supposing them to be eye-witnesses, he endeavours to shew how they might be deceived.

IV. The unconverted Heathens, who were pressed by the many authorities that confirmed our Saviour's miracles, as well as the unbelieving Jews, who had actually seen them, were driven to account for them after the same manner: for, to work by magic in the Heathen way of speaking, was in the language of the Jews to cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. Our Saviour, who knew that unbelievers in all ages would put this perverse interpretation on his miracles, has branded the malignity of those men, who, contrary to the dictates of their own hearts, started such an unreasonable objection, as a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and declared not only the guilt, but the punishment of so black a crime. At the same time he condescended to shew the vanity and emptiness of this objection against his miracles, by representing, that they evidently tended to the destruction of those powers, to whose assistance the enemies of his doctrine then ascribed them: an argument, which, if duly weighed, renders the objection so very frivolous and groundless, that we may venture to call it even blasphemy against common sense. Would magic endeavour to draw off the minds of men from the worship that was paid to stocks and stones, to give them an abhorrence of those evil spirits, who rejoiced in the most cruel sacrifices, and in offerings of the greatest impurity; and, in short, to call upon mankind to exert their whole strength in the love and adoration of that Being, from whom they derived their existence, and on whom only they were taught to depend every moment for the happiness and continuance of it? Was it the business of magic to humanize our natures with compassion, forgiveness, and all the instances of the most extensive charity? Would evil spirits contribute to make men sober, chaste, and temperate, and, in a word, to produce that reformation, which was wrought in the moral world by those doctrines of our Saviour, that received their sanction from his miracles? Nor is it possible to imagine, that evil spirits would enter into a combination with our Saviour, to cut off all their correspondence and intercourse with mankind, and to prevent any for the future from addicting themselves to those rites and ceremonies, which had done them so much honour. We see the early effect which Christianity had on the minds of men in this particular, by that number of books, which were filled with the secret of magic, and made a sacrifice to Christianity, by the converts mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. We have likewise an eminent instance of the inconsistency of our religion with magic, in the history of the famous Aquila. This person, who was a kinsman of the emperor Trajan, and likewise a man of great learning, notwithstanding he had embraced Christianity, could not be brought off from the studies of magic by the repeated admonitions of his Fellow-

 christians;

chriſtians; ſo that at length they expelled him their ſociety, as rather chuſing to loſe the reputation of ſo conſiderable a proſelyte, than communicate with one who dealt in ſuch dark and infernal practices. Beſides, we may obſerve, that all the favourers of magic were the moſt profeſt and bitter enemies to the Chriſtian religion. Not to mention Simon Magus and many others, I ſhall only take notice of two great perſecutors of Chriſtianity, the emperors Adrian and Julian the apoſtate, both of them initiated in the myſteries of divination, and ſkilled in all the depths of magic. I ſhall only add, that evil ſpirits cannot be ſuppoſed to have concurred in the eſtabliſhment of a religion, which triumphed over them, drove them out of the places they poſſeſt, and diveſted them of their influence on mankind; nor would I mention this particular, though it be unanimouſly reported by all the ancient Chriſtian authors, did it not appear, from the authorities above cited, that this was a fact confeſt by Heathens themſelves.

V. We now ſee what a multiude of Pagan teſtimonies may be produced for all thoſe remarkable paſſages, which might have been expected from them; and indeed of ſeveral, that, I believe, do more than anſwer your expectation, as they were not ſubjects in their own nature ſo expoſed to public notoriety. It cannot be expected they ſhould mention particulars which were tranſacted among the diſciples only, or among ſome few even of the diſciples themſelves; ſuch as the transfiguration, the agony in the garden, the appearance of Chriſt after his reſurrection, and others of the like nature. It was impoſſible for a Heathen author to relate theſe things; becauſe, if he had believed them, he would no longer have been a Heathen, and by that means his teſtimony would not have been thought of ſo much validity. Beſides, his very report of facts, ſo favourable to Chriſtianity, would have prompted men to ſay that he was probably tainted with their doctrine. We have a parallel caſe in Hecatæus, a famous Greek hiſtorian, who had ſeveral paſſages in his book conformable to the hiſtory of the Jewiſh writers, which, when quoted by Joſephus, as a confirmation of the Jewiſh hiſtory, when his Heathen adverſaries could give no other anſwer to it, they would need ſuppoſe that Hecatæus was a Jew in his heart, though they had no other reaſon for it, but becauſe his hiſtory gave greater authority to the Jewiſh than the Egyptian records.

SECTION III.

I. *Introduction to a ſecond liſt of Pagan authors, who give teſtimony of our Saviour.*
II. *A paſſage concerning our Saviour, from a learned Athenian.*
III. *His converſion from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity makes his evidence ſtronger than if he had continued a Pagan.*
IV. *Of another Athenian philoſopher converted to Chriſtianity.*
V. *Why their converſion, inſtead of weakening, ſtrengthens their evidence in defence of Chriſtianity.*
VI. *Their belief in our Saviour's hiſtory founded at firſt upon the principles of hiſtorical faith.*
VII. *Their teſtimonies extended to all the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory.*
VIII. *As related by the four Evangeliſts.*

I. TO this liſt of Heathen writers, who make mention of our Saviour, or touch upon any particulars of his life, I ſhall add thoſe authors who were at firſt Heathens, and afterwards converted to Chriſtianity; upon which account, as I ſhall here ſhew, their teſtimonies are to be looked upon as the moſt authentick. And in this liſt of evidences, I ſhall confine myſelf to ſuch learned Pagans as came over to Chriſtianity in the three firſt centuries, becauſe thoſe were the times in which men had the beſt means of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, and becauſe among the great number of philoſophers who came in afterwards, under the reigns of Chriſtian emperors, there might be ſeveral who did it partly out of worldly motives.

II. Let us now ſuppoſe, that a learned Heathen writer, who lived within ſixty years of our Saviour's crucifixion, after having ſhewn that falſe miracles were generally wrought in obſcurity, and before few or no witneſſes, ſpeaking of thoſe which were wrought by our Saviour, has the following paſſage: "But his works were always ſeen, "becauſe they were true; they were ſeen by thoſe who were healed, "and by thoſe who were raiſed from the dead. Nay, theſe perſons "who were thus healed and raiſed, were ſeen not only at the time "of their being healed and raiſed, but long afterwards. Nay, they "were not ſeen only all the while our Saviour was upon earth, "but ſurvived after his departure out of this world; nay, ſome of "them were living in our days."

III. I dare ſay you would look upon this as a glorious atteſtation for the cauſe of Chriſtianity, had it come from the hand of a famous Athenian philoſopher. Theſe forementioned words, however, are actually the words of one who lived about ſixty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, and was a famous philoſopher in Athens; but it will be ſaid, he was a convert to Chriſtianity. Now conſider this matter impartially, and ſee if his teſtimony is not much more valid, for that reaſon. Had he continued a Pagan philoſopher, would not the world have ſaid, that he was not ſincere in what he writ, or did not believe it? for, if ſo, would not they have told us he would have embraced Chriſtianity? This was indeed the caſe of

this excellent man: he had ſo thoroughly examined the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, and the excellency of that religion which he taught, and was ſo entirely convinced of both, that he became a proſelyte, and died a martyr.

IV. Ariſtides was an Athenian philoſopher, at the ſame time famed for his learning and wiſdom, but converted to Chriſtianity. As it cannot be queſtioned that he peruſed and approved the apology of Quadratus, in which is the paſſage juſt now cited, he joined with him in an apology of his own, to the ſame emperor, on the ſame ſubject. This apology, though now loſt, was extant in the time of Ado Vinnenſis, A. D. 789, and highly eſteemed by the moſt learned Athenians, as that author witneſſes. It muſt have contained great arguments for the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, becauſe in it he aſſerted the divinity of our Saviour, which could not but engage him in the proof of his miracles.

V. I do allow that, generally ſpeaking, a man is not ſo acceptable and unqueſtioned an evidence in facts which make for the advancement of his own party. But we muſt conſider, that, in the caſe before us, the perſons to whom we appeal were of an oppoſite party, till they were perſuaded of the truth of thoſe very facts which they report. They bear evidence to a hiſtory in defence of Chriſtianity, the truth of which hiſtory was their motive to embrace Chriſtianity. They atteſt facts which they had heard while they were yet Heathens; and, had they not found reaſon to believe them, they would ſtill have continued Heathens, and have made no mention of them in their writings.

VI. When a man is born under Chriſtian parents, and trained up in the profeſſion of that religion from a child, he generally guides himſelf by the rules of Chriſtian faith, in believing what is delivered by the Evangeliſts; but the learned Pagans of antiquity, before they became Chriſtians, were only guided by the common rules of hiſtorical faith; that is, they examined the nature of the evidence which was to be met with in common fame, tradition, and the writings of thoſe perſons who related them, together with the number, concurrence, veracity, and private characters of thoſe perſons; and being convinced, on all accounts, that they had the ſame reaſon to believe the hiſtory of our Saviour, as that of any other perſon to which they themſelves were not actually eye-witneſſes, they were bound by all the rules of hiſtorical faith, and of right reaſon, to give credit to this hiſtory. This they did accordingly, and in conſequence of it publiſhed the ſame truths themſelves, ſuffered many afflictions, and very often death itſelf, in the aſſertion of them. When I ſay, that an hiſtorical belief of the acts of our Saviour induced theſe learned Pagans to embrace his doctrine, I do not deny that there were many other motives which conduced to it; as the excellency of his precepts, the fulfilling of prophecies, the miracles of his diſciples, the irreproachable lives and magnanimous ſufferings of their followers, with other conſiderations of the ſame nature: but, whatever other collateral arguments wrought more

more or less with philosophers of that age, it is certain that a belief in the history of our Saviour was one motive with every new convert, and that upon which all others turned, as being the very basis and foundation of Christianity.

VII. To this I must further add, that, as we have already seen many particular facts, which are recorded in Holy Writ, attested by particular Pagan authors, the testimony of those I am now going to produce, extends to the whole history of our Saviour, and to that continued series of actions which are related of him and his disciples in the books of the New Testament.

VIII. This evidently appears from their quotations out of the Evangelists, for the confirmation of any doctrine or account of our blessed Saviour. Nay, a learned man of our nation, who examined the writings of our most ancient fathers in another view, refers to several passages in Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, and Cyprian; by which he plainly shews, that each of these writers ascribed to the four Evangelists by name their respective histories; so that there is not the least room for doubting of their belief in the history of our Saviour, as recorded in the Gospels. I shall only add, that three of the five fathers here mentioned, and probably four, were Pagans converted to Christianity, as they were all of them very inquisitive and deep in the knowledge of Heathen learning and philosophy.

SECTION IV.

I. *Character of the times in which the Christian religion was propagated.*
II. *And of many who embraced it.*
III. *Three eminent and early instances.*
IV. *Multitudes of learned men who came over to it.*
V. *Belief in our Saviour's history the first motive to their conversion.*
VI. *The names of several Pagan philosophers, who were Christian converts.*

I. IT happened very providentially to the honour of the Christian religion, that it did not take its rise in the dark illiterate ages of the world, but at a time when arts and sciences were at their height, and when there were men who made it the business of their lives to search after truth, and sift the several opinions of philosophers and wise men concerning the duty, the end, and chief happiness of reasonable creatures.

II. Several of these therefore, when they had informed themselves of our Saviour's history, and examined with unprejudiced minds the doctrines and manners of his disciples and followers, were so struck and convinced, that they professed themselves of that sect; notwithstanding by this profession, in that juncture of time, they bid farewell to all the pleasures of this life, renounced all the views of ambition, engaged in an uninterrupted course of severities, and exposed themselves to publick hatred and contempt, to sufferings of all kinds, and to death itself.

III. Of this sort we may reckon those three early converts to Christianity, who each of them was a member of a senate famous for its wisdom and learning. Joseph the Arimathean was of the Jewish Sanhedrim; Dionysius, of the Athenian Areopagus; and Flavius Clemens, of the Roman Senate; nay, at the time of his death, consul of Rome. These three were so thoroughly satisfied of the truth of the Christian religion, that the first of them, according to all the reports of antiquity, died a martyr for it; as did the second, unless we disbelieve Aristides, his fellow-citizen and contemporary; and the third, as we are informed both by Roman and Christian authors.

IV. Among those innumerable multitudes, who in most of the known nations of the world came over to Christianity at its first appearance, we may be sure, there were great numbers of wise and learned men, besides those whose names are in the Christian records, who without doubt took care to examine the truth of our Saviour's history, before they would leave the religion of their country and their forefathers, for the sake of one that would not only cut them off from the allurements of this world, but subject them to every thing terrible or disagreeable in it. Tertullian tells the Roman governors, that their corporations, councils, armies, tribes, companies, the palace, senate, and courts of judicature, were filled with Christians; as Arnobius asserts, that men of the finest parts and learning, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, philosophers, despising the sentiments they had been once fond of, took up their rest in the Christian religion.

V. Who can imagine that men of this character did not thoroughly inform themselves of the history of that person whose doctrines they embraced? for, however consonant to reason his precepts appeared, how good soever were the effects which they produced in the world, nothing could have tempted men to acknowledge him as their God and Saviour, but their being firmly persuaded of the miracles he wrought, and the many attestations of his divine mission, which were to be met with in the history of his life. This was the groundwork of the Christian religion; and, if this failed, the whole superstructure sunk with it. This point, therefore, of the truth of our Saviour's history, as recorded by the Evangelists, is every where taken for granted in the writings of those, who from Pagan philosophers became Christian authors, and who, by reason of their conversion, are to be looked upon as of the strongest collateral testimony for the truth of what is delivered concerning our Saviour.

VI. Besides innumerable authors that are lost, we have the undoubted names, works, or fragments of several Pagan philosphers, which shew them to have been as learned as any unconverted Heathen authors of the age in which they lived. If we look into the greatest nurseries of learning in those ages of the world, we find in Athens, Dionysius, Quadratus, Aristides, Athenagoras; and, in Alexandria, Dionysius, Clemens, Ammonius, and Anatolius, to whom

whom we may add Origen; for though his father was a Chriſtian martyr, he became, without all controverſy, the moſt learned and able philopher of his age, by his education at Alexandria, in that famous ſeminary of arts and ſciences.

SECTION V.

I. *The learned Pagans had means and opportunities of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory;*
II. *From the proceedings,*
III. *The characters, ſufferings,*
IV. *And miracles of the perſons who publiſhed it.*
V. *How theſe firſt Apoſtles perpetuated their tradition, by ordaining perſons to ſucceed them.*
VI. *How their ſucceſſors in the three firſt centuries preſerved their tradition.*
VII. *That five generations might derive this tradition from Chriſt, to the end of the third century.*
VIII. *Four eminent Chriſtians that delivered it down ſucceſſively to the year of our Lord 254.*
IX. *The faith of the four above-mention'd perſons the ſame with that of the churches of the Eaſt, of the Weſt, and of Egypt.*
X. *Another perſon added to them, who brings us to the year 343, and that many other liſts might be added in as direct and ſhort a ſucceſſion.*
XI. *Why the tradition of the three firſt centuries more authentick than that of any other age, proved from the converſation of the primitive Chriſtians.*
XII. *From the manner of initiating men into their religion.*
XIII. *From the correſpondence between the churches.*
XIV. *From the long lives of ſeveral of Chriſt's diſciples, of which two inſtances.*

I. IT now therefore only remains to conſider whether theſe learned men had means and opportunities of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory; for, unleſs this point can be made out, their teſtimonies will appear invalid, and their inquiries ineffectual.

II. As to this point, we muſt conſider, that many thouſands had ſeen the tranſactions of our Saviour in Judæa, and that many hundred thouſands had received an account of them from the mouths of thoſe who were actually eye-witneſſes. I ſhall only mention among theſe eye-witneſſes the twelve Apoſtles, to whom we muſt add St. Paul, who had a particular call to this high office, though many other diſciples and followers of Chriſt had alſo their ſhare in the publiſhing of this wonderful hiſtory. We learn from the ancient records of Chriſtianity, that many of the Apoſtles and Diſciples made it the expreſs buſineſs of their lives, travelled into the remoteſt parts of the world, and in all places gathered multitudes about them, to acquaint them with the hiſtory and doctrines of their crucified Maſter. And, indeed, were all Chriſtian records of theſe proceedings entirely loſt, as many have been, the effect plainly evinces the truth

of them; for how elſe during the Apoſtles lives could Chriſtianity have ſpread itſelf with ſuch an amazing progreſs through the ſeveral nations of the Roman empire? How could it fly like lightning, and carry conviction with it, from one end of the earth to the other?

III. Heathens therefore of every age, ſex, and quality, born in the moſt different climates, and bred up under the moſt different inſtitutions, when they ſaw men of plain ſenſe, without the help of learning, armed with patience and courage, inſtead of wealth, pomp, or power, expreſſing in their lives thoſe excellent doctrines of morality, which they taught as delivered to them from our Saviour, averring that they had ſeen his miracles during his life, and converſed with him after his death: when, I ſay, they ſaw no ſuſpicion of falſehood, treachery, or worldly intereſt, in their behaviour and converſation, and that they ſubmitted to the moſt ignominious and cruel deaths, rather than retract their teſtimony, or even be ſilent in matters which they were to publiſh by their Saviour's eſpecial command, there was no reaſon to doubt of the veracity of thoſe facts which they related, or of the divine miſſion in which they were employed.

IV. But even theſe motives to faith in our Saviour would not have been ſufficient to have brought about in ſo few years ſuch an incredible number of converſions, had not the Apoſtles been able to exhibit ſtill greater proofs of the truths which they taught. A few perſons of an odious and deſpiſed country could not have filled the world with believers, had they not ſhewn undoubted credentials from the Divine Perſon who ſent them on ſuch a meſſage. Accordingly we are aſſured, that they were inveſted with the power of working miracles, which was the moſt ſhort and the moſt convincing argument that could be produced, and the only one that was adapted to the reaſon of all mankind, to the capacities of the wiſe and ignorant, and could overcome every cavil and every prejudice. Who would not believe that our Saviour healed the ſick, and raiſed the dead, when it was publiſhed by thoſe who themſelves often did the ſame miracles, in their preſence, and in his name? Could any reaſonable perſon imagine, that God Almighty would arm men with ſuch powers to authorize a lie, and eſtabliſh a religion in the world which was diſpleaſing to him, or that evil ſpirits would lend them ſuch an effectual aſſiſtance to beat down vice and idolatry?

V. When the Apoſtles had formed many aſſemblies in ſeveral parts of the Pagan world, who gave credit to the glad tidings of the Goſpel, that, upon their departure, the memory of what they had related might not periſh, they appointed out of theſe new converts men of the beſt ſenſe, and of the moſt unblemiſhed lives, to preſide over theſe ſeveral aſſemblies, and to inculcate without ceaſing what they had heard from the mouths of theſe eye-witneſſes.

VI. Upon the death of any of thoſe ſubſtitutes to the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt, his place was filled up with ſome other perſon of eminence for his piety and learning, and generally a member of the ſame church, who after his deceaſe was followed by another

another in the ſame manner, by which means the ſucceſſion was continued in an uninterrupted line. Irenæus informs us, that every church preſerved a catalogue of its biſhops in the order that they ſucceeded one another; and (for an example) produces the catalogue of thoſe who governed the church of Rome in that character, which contains eight or nine perſons, though but a very ſmall remove from the times of the Apoſtles.

Indeed the liſts of biſhops, which are come down to us in other churches, are generally filled with greater numbers than one would expect. But the ſucceſſion was quick in the three firſt centuries, becauſe the biſhop very often ended in the martyr: for when a perſecution roſe in any place, the firſt fury of it fell upon this order of holy men, who abundantly teſtified, by their deaths and ſufferings, that they did not undertake theſe offices out of any temporal views, that they were ſincere and ſatisfied in the belief of what they taught, and that they firmly adhered to what they had received from the Apoſtles, as laying down their lives in the ſame hope, and upon the ſame principles. None can be ſuppoſed ſo utterly regardleſs of their own happineſs as to expire in torment, and hazard their eternity, to ſupport any fables and inventions of their own, or any forgeries of their predeceſſors who had preſided in the ſame church, and which might have been eaſily detected by the tradition of that particular church, as well as by the concurring teſtimony of others. To this purpoſe, I think it is very remarkable, that there was not a ſingle martyr among thoſe many heretics who diſagreed with the apoſtolical church, and introduced ſeveral wild and abſurd notions into the doctrines of Chriſtianity. They durſt not ſtake their preſent and future happineſs on their own chimerical operations, and did not only ſhun perſecution, but affirmed that it was unneceſſary for their followers to bear their religion through ſuch fiery trials.

VII. We may fairly reckon, that this firſt ſtate of Apoſtles and Diſciples, with that ſecond generation of many who were there immediate converts, extended itſelf to the middle of the ſecond century, and that ſeveral of the third generation from theſe laſt mentioned, which was but the fifth from Chriſt, continued to the end of the third century. Did we know the ages and numbers of the members in every particular church which was planted by the Apoſtles, I doubt not but in moſt of them there might be found five perſons who in a continued ſeries would reach through theſe three centuries of years, that is, till the 265th from the death of our Saviour.

VIII. Among the accounts of thoſe very few out of innumerable multitudes who had embraced Chriſtianity, I ſhall ſingle out four perſons eminent for their lives, their writings, and their ſufferings, that were, ſucceſſively, contemporaries, and bring us down as far as to the year of our Lord 254. St. John, who was the beloved Diſciple, and converſed the moſt intimately with our Saviour, lived till Anno Dom. 100; Polycarp, who was the diſciple of St. John, lived till Anno Dom. 167, though his life was ſhortened by martyrdom; Irenæus, who was the diſciple of Polycarp, and had converſed with

with many of the immediate disciples of the apostles, lived, at the lowest computation of his age, till the year 202, when he was likewise cut off by martyrdom; in which year the great Origen was appointed regent of the catechetick school in Alexandria, and as he was the miracle of that age, for industry, learning, and philosophy, he was looked upon as the champion of Christianity, till the year 254, when, if he did not suffer martyrdom, as some think he did, he was certainly actuated by the spirit of it, as appears in the whole course of his life and writings; nay, he had often been put to the torture, and had undergone trials worse than death. As he conversed with the most eminent Christians of his time in Ægypt, and in the East, brought over multitudes both from heresy and heathenism, and left behind him several disciples of great fame and learning, there is no question but there were considerable numbers of those who knew him, and had been his hearers, scholars, or proselytes, that lived till the end of the third century, and to the reign of Constantine the Great.

IX. It is evident to those who read the lives and writings of Polycarp, Irenæus, and Origen, that these three fathers believed the accounts which are given of our Saviour in the four Evangelists, and had undoubted arguments that not only St. John, but many others of our Saviour's disciples, published the same accounts of him. To which we must subjoin this further remark, that what was believed by these fathers on this subject was likewise the belief of the main body of Christians in those successive ages when they flourished; since Polycarp cannot but be looked upon, if we consider the respect that was paid him, as the representative of the Eastern churches in this particular, Irenæus of the Western upon the same account, and Origen of those established in Egypt.

X. To these I might add Paul the famous hermit, who retired from the Decian persecution five or six years before Origen's death, and lived till the year 343. I have only discovered one of those channels by which the history of our Saviour might be conveyed pure and unadulterated through those several ages that produced those Pagan philosophers, whose testimonies I make use of for the truth of our Saviour's history. Some or other of these philosophers came into the Christian faith during its infancy, in the several periods of these three first centuries, when they had such means of informing themselves in all the particulars of our Saviour's history. I must further add, that though I have here only chosen this single link of martyrs, I might find out others among those names which are still extant, that delivered down this account of our Saviour in a successive tradition, till the whole Roman empire became Christian; as there is no question but numberless series of witnesses might follow one another in the same order, and in as short a chain, and that perhaps in every single church, had the names and ages of the most eminent primitive Christians been transmitted to us with the like certainty.

XI. But, to give this consideration more force, we must take notice, that the tradition of the first ages of Christianity had several circumstances

circumſtances peculiar to it, which made it more authentick than any other tradition in any other age of the world. The Chriſtians, who carried their religion through ſo many general and particular perſecutions, were inceſſantly comforting and ſupporting one another with the example and hiſtory of our Saviour and his Apoſtles. It was the ſubject not only of their ſolemn aſſemblies, but of their private viſits and converſations. "Our virgins," ſays Tatian, who lived in the ſecond century, "diſcourſe over their diſtaffs on divine "ſubjects." Indeed, when religion was woven into the civil government, and flouriſhed under the protection of the emperors, mens thoughts and diſcourſes were, as they are now, full of ſecular affairs; but, in the three firſt centuries of Chriſtianity, men, who embraced this religion, had given up all their intereſts in this world, and lived in a perpetual preparation for the next, as not knowing how ſoon they might be called to it: ſo that they had little elſe to talk of but the life and doctrines of that Divine Perſon, which was their hope, their encouragement, and their glory. We cannot therefore imagine that there was a ſingle perſon, arrived at any degree of age or conſideration, who had not heard and repeated, above a thouſand times in his life, all the particulars of our Saviour's birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion

XII. Eſpecially if we conſider, that they could not then be received as Chriſtians till they had undergone ſeveral examinations. Perſons of riper years, who flocked daily into the church during the three firſt centuries, were obliged to paſs through many repeated inſtructions, and give a ſtrict account of their proficiency, before they were admitted to baptiſm. And as for thoſe who were born of Chriſtian parents, and had been baptiſed in their infancy, they were with the like care prepared and diſciplined for confirmation, which they could not arrive at till they were found, upon examination, to have made a ſufficient progreſs in the knowledge of Chriſtianity.

XIII. We muſt further obſerve, that there was not only in thoſe times this religious converſation among private Chriſtians, but a conſtant correſpondence between the churches that were eſtabliſhed by the Apoſtles, or their ſucceſſors, in the ſeveral parts of the world. If any new doctrine was ſtarted, or any fact reported of our Saviour, a ſtrict enquiry was made among the churches, eſpecially thoſe planted by the Apoſtles themſelves, whether they had received any ſuch doctrine or account of our Saviour, from the mouths of the Apoſtles, or the tradition of thoſe Chriſtians who had preceded the preſent members of the churches which were thus conſulted. By this means, when any novelty was publiſhed, it was immediately detected and cenſured.

XIV. St. John, who lived ſo many years after our Saviour, was appealed to in theſe emergencies as the living oracle of the church; and, as his oral teſtimony laſted the firſt century, many have obſerved that, by a particular providence of God, ſeveral of our Saviour's diſciples, and of the early converts of his religion, lived to a very great age, that they might perſonally convey the truth of the Goſpel

to thoſe times which were very remote from the firſt publication of it. Of theſe, beſides St. John, we have a remarkable inſtance in Simeon, who was one of the Seventy ſent forth by our Saviour to publiſh the Goſpel before his crucfixion, and a near kinſman of the Lord. This venerable perſon, who had probably heard with his own ears our Saviour's prophecy of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, preſided over the church eſtabliſhed in that city, during the time of its memorable ſiege, and drew his congregation out of thoſe dreadful and unparalleled calamities which befell his countrymen, by following the advice our Saviour had given, when they ſhould ſee Jeruſalem encompaſſed with armies, and the Roman ſtandards, or abomination of deſolation, ſet up. He lived till the year of our Lord 107, when he was martyred under the Emperor Trajan.

SECTION VI.

I. *The tradition of the Apoſtles ſecured by other excellent inſtitutions;*
II. *But chiefly by writing of the Evangeliſts.*
III. *The diligence of the Diſciples and firſt Chriſtian converts, to ſend abroad theſe writings.*
IV. *That the written account of our Saviour was the ſame with that delivered by tradition:*
V. *Proved from the reception of the Goſpel by thoſe Churches which were eſtabliſhed before it was written;*
VI. *From the uniformity of what was believed in the ſeveral Churches;*
VII. *From a remarkable paſſage in Irenæus.*
VIII. *Records which are now loſt, of uſe to the three firſt centuries, for confirming the hiſtory of our Saviour.*
IX. *Inſtances of ſuch records.*

I. THUS far we ſee how the learned Pagans might apprize themſelves from oral information of the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory. They could hear, in every church planted in every diſtant part of the earth, the account which was there received and preſerved among them of the hiſtory of our Saviour. They could learn the names and characters of thoſe firſt miſſionaries that brought to them theſe accounts, and the miracles by which God Almighty atteſted their reports. But the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt, to preſerve the hiſtory of his life, and to ſecure their accounts of him from error and oblivion, did not only ſet aſide certain perſons for that purpoſe, as has been already ſhewn, but appropriated certain days to the commemoration of thoſe facts which they had related concerning him. The firſt day in the week was in all its returns a perpetual memorial of his reſurrection, as the devotional exerciſes adapted to Friday and Saturday were to denote to all ages that he was crucified on the one of thoſe days, and that he reſted in the grave on the other. You may apply the ſame remark to ſeveral of the annual feſtivals inſtituted by the Apoſtles themſelves, or at furtheſt by their immediate ſucceſſors, in memory of the moſt important particulars in our Saviour's hiſtory; to which we muſt add the Sacraments

Sacraments inſtituted by our Lord himſelf, and many of thoſe rites and ceremonies which obtained in the moſt early times of the church. Theſe are to be regarded as ſtanding marks of ſuch facts as were delivered by thoſe who were eye-witneſſes to them, and which were contrived with great wiſdom to laſt till time ſhould be no more. Theſe, without any other means, might have, in ſome meaſure, conveyed to poſterity the memory of ſeveral tranſactions in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as they were related by his Diſciples. At leaſt, the reaſon of theſe inſtitutions, though they might be forgotten, and obſcured by a long courſe of years, could not but be very well known by thoſe who lived in the three firſt centuries, and a means of informing the inquiſitive Pagans in the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, that being the view in which I am to conſider them.

II. But leſt ſuch a tradition, though guarded by ſo many expedients, ſhould wear out by the length of time, the four Evangeliſts within about fifty, or, as Theodoret affirms, thirty years, after our Saviour's death, while the memory of his actions was freſh among them, conſigned to writing that hiſtory, which for ſome years had been publiſhed only by the mouths of the Apoſtles and Diſciples. The further conſideration of theſe holy penmen will fall under another part of this diſcourſe.

III. It will be ſufficient to obſerve here, that in the age which ſucceeded the Apoſtles, many of their immediate Diſciples ſent or carried in perſon the books of the four Evangeliſts, which had been written by the Apoſtles, or at leaſt approved by them, to moſt of the churches which they had planted in the different parts of the world. This was done with ſo much diligence, that when Pantænus, a man of great learning and piety, had travelled into India for the propagation of Chriſtianity, about the year of our Lord 200, he found among that remote people the Goſpel of St. Matthew, which upon his return from that country he brought with him to Alexandria. This Goſpel is generally ſuppoſed to have been left in thoſe parts by St. Bartholomew the Apoſtle of the Indies, who probably carried it with him before the writings of the three other Evangeliſts were publiſhed.

IV. That the hiſtory of our Saviour, as recorded by the Evangeliſts, was the ſame with that which had been before delivered by the Apoſtles and Diſciples, will further appear in the proſecution of this diſcourſe, and may be gathered from the following conſiderations.

V. Had theſe writings differed from the ſermons of the firſt planters of Chriſtianity, either in hiſtory or doctrine, there is no queſtion but they would have been rejected by thoſe churches which they had already formed. But ſo conſiſtent and uniform was the relation of the Apoſtles, that theſe hiſtories appeared to be nothing elſe but their tradition and oral atteſtations made fixed and permanent. Thus was the fame of our Saviour, which in ſo few years had gone through the whole earth, confirmed and perpetuated by ſuch records

cords as would preſerve the traditionary account of him to after-ages; and rectify it, if, at any time, by paſſing through ſeveral generations, it might drop any part that was material, or contract any thing that was falſe or fictitious.

VI. Accordingly we find the ſame Jeſus Chriſt, who was born of a Virgin, who had wrought many miracles in Paleſtine, who was crucified, roſe again, and aſcended into Heaven: I ſay, the ſame Jeſus Chriſt had been preached, and was worſhiped, in Germany, France, Spain, and Great Britain, in Parthia, Media, Meſopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Aſia and Pamphilia, in Italy, Egypt, Africa, and beyond Cyrene, India, and Perſia, and, in ſhort, in all the iſlands and provinces that are viſited by the riſing or ſetting ſun. The ſame account of our Saviour's life and doctrine was delivered by thouſands of Preachers, and believed in thouſands of places, who all, as faſt as it could be conveyed to them, received the ſame account in writing from the four Evangeliſts.

VII. Irenæus to this purpoſe very aptly remarks, that thoſe barbarous nations, who in his time were not poſſeſſed of the written Goſpels, and had only learned the hiſtory of our Saviour from thoſe who had converted them to Chriſtianity before the Goſpels were written, had among them the ſame accounts of our Saviour which are to be met with in the four Evangeliſts; an unconteſtable proof of the harmony and concurrence between the Holy Scripture and the tradition of the churches in thoſe early times of Chriſtianity.

VIII. Thus we ſee what opportunities the learned and inquiſitive Heathens had of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory during the three firſt centuries, eſpecially as they lay nearer one than another to the fountain-head: beſides which, there were many uncontroverted traditions, records of Chriſtianity, and particular hiſtories, that then threw light into theſe matters, but are now entirely loſt, by which, at that time, any appearance of contradiction, or ſeeming difficulties, in the hiſtory of the Evangeliſts, were fully cleared up and explained: though we meet with fewer appearances of this nature in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as related by the four Evangeliſts, than in the accounts of any other perſon, publiſhed by ſuch a number of different hiſtorians who lived at ſo great a diſtance from the preſent age.

IX. Among thoſe records which are loſt, and were of great uſe to the primitive Chriſtians, is the letter to Tiberius, which I have already mentioned; that of Marcus Aurelius, which I ſhall take notice of hereafter; the writings of Hegeſippus, who had drawn down the hiſtory of Chriſtianity to his own time, which was not beyond the middle of the ſecond century; the genuine Sibylline oracles, which in the firſt ages of the church were eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the ſpurious; the records preſerved in particular churches, with many others of the ſame nature.

SECTION

SECTION VII.

I. *The ſight of miracles in thoſe ages a further confirmation of Pagan philoſophers in the Chriſtian faith.*
II. *The credibility of ſuch miracles.*
III. *A particular inſtance.*
IV. *Martyrdom, why conſidered as a ſtanding miracle.*
V. *Primitive Chriſtians thought many of the martyrs were ſupported by a miraculous power.*
VI. *Proved from the nature of their ſufferings.*
VII. *How martyrs further induced the Pagans to embrace Chriſtianity.*

I. THERE were other means, which I find had a great influence on the learned of the three firſt centuries, to create and confirm in them the belief of our bleſſed Saviour's hiſtory, which ought not to be paſſed over in ſilence. The firſt was, the opportunity they enjoyed of examining thoſe miracles, which were on ſeveral occaſions performed by Chriſtians, and appeared in the church, more or leſs, during theſe firſt ages of Chriſtianity. Theſe had great weight with the men I am now ſpeaking of, who, from learned Pagans, became Fathers of the church; for they frequently boaſt of them in their writings, as atteſtations given by God himſelf to the truth of their religion.

II. At the ſame time that theſe learned men declare how diſingenuous, baſe, and wicked, it would be, how much beneath the dignity of philoſophy, and contrary to the precepts of Chriſtianity, to utter falſehoods or forgeries in the ſupport of a cauſe, though never ſo juſt in itſelf, they confidently aſſert this miraculous power, which then ſubſiſted in the church, nay, tell us that they themſelves had been eye-witneſſes of it at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral inſtances; nay, appeal to the Heathens themſelves for the truth of ſeveral facts they relate; nay, challenge them to be preſent at their aſſemblies, and ſatisfy themſelves, if they doubt of it; nay, we find that Pagan authors have in ſome inſtances confeſſed this miraculous power.

III. The letter of Marcus Aurelius, whoſe army was preſerved by a refreſhing ſhower, at the ſame time that his enemies were diſcomfited by a ſtorm of lightning, and which the Heathen hiſtorians themſelves allow to have been ſupernatural and the effect of magic: I ſay, this letter, which aſcribed this unexpected aſſiſtance to the prayers of the Chriſtians who then ſerved in the army, would have been thought an unqueſtionable teſtimony of the miraculous power I am ſpeaking of, had it been ſtill preſerved. It is ſufficient for me in this place to take notice, that this was one of thoſe miracles which had its influence on the learned converts, becauſe it is related by Tertullian, and the very letter appealed to. When theſe learned men ſaw ſickneſs and frenzy cured, the dead raiſed, the oracles put to ſilence, the dæmons and evil ſpirits forced to confeſs themſelves no gods, by perſons who only made uſe of prayer and adjurations in the name of their crucified Saviour; how could they doubt of their Saviour's power on the like occaſions, as repreſented to them

by

by the traditions of the church, and the writings of the Evangelists?

IV. Under this head, I cannot omit that which appears to me a ſtanding miracle in the three firſt centuries, I mean that amazing and ſupernatural courage or patience which was ſhewn by innumerable multitudes of martyrs in thoſe ſlow and painful torments that were inflicted on them. I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair at Lyons, amid the inſults and mockeries of a crowded ampitheatre, and ſtill keeping his ſeat; or ſtretched upon a grate of iron, over coals of fire, and breathing out his ſoul among the exquiſite ſufferings of ſuch a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, or blaſpheme his Saviour. Such trials ſeem to me above the ſtrength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reaſon, faith, conviction, nay, and the moſt abſolute certainty of a future ſtate. Humanity, unaſſiſted in an extraordinary manner, muſt have ſhaken off the preſent preſſure, and have delivered itſelf out of ſuch a dreadful diſtreſs by any means that could have been ſuggeſted to it. We can eaſily imagine, that many perſons, in ſo good a cauſe, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the ſtake, or the block: but to expire leiſurely among the moſt exquiſite tortures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reſervation, or an hypocriſy which was not without a poſſibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveneſs, has ſomething in it ſo far beyond the force and natural ſtrength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was ſome miraculous power to ſupport the ſufferer.

V. We find the church of Smyrna, in that admirable letter which gives an account of the death of Polycarp their beloved biſhop, mentioning the cruel torments of their early martyrs for Chriſtianity, are of opinion, that our Saviour ſtood by them in a viſion, and perſonally converſed with them, to give them ſtrength and comfort during the bitterneſs of their long-continued agonies; and we have the ſtory of a young man, who, having ſuffered many tortures, eſcaped with life, and told his fellow-chriſtians, that the pain of them had been rendered tolerable, by the preſence of an angel that ſtood by him, and wiped off the tears and ſweat which ran down his face whilſt he lay under his ſufferings. We are aſſured at leaſt that the firſt martyr for Chriſtianity was encouraged, in his laſt moments, by a viſion of that Divine Perſon for whom he ſuffered, and into whoſe preſence he was then haſtening.

VI. Let any man calmly lay his hand upon his heart, and after reading theſe terrible conflicts in which the ancient martyrs and confeſſors were engaged, when they paſſed through ſuch new inventions and varieties of pain, as tired their tormentors; and aſk himſelf, however zealous and ſincere he is in his religion, whether, under ſuch acute and lingering tortures, he could ſtill have held faſt his integrity, and have profeſſed his faith to the laſt, without a ſupernatural aſſiſtance of ſome kind or other. For my part, when I conſider that it was not an unaccountable obſtinacy in a ſingle man, or in any particular ſet of men, in ſome extraordinary juncture; but that there were

were multitudes of each ſex, of every age, of different countries and conditions, who, for near 300 years together, made this glorious confeſſion of their faith, in the midſt of tortures, and in the hour of death. I muſt conclude, that they were either of another make than men are at preſent, or that they had ſuch miraculous ſupports as were peculiar to thoſe times of Chriſtianity, when without them perhaps the very name of it might have been extinguiſhed.

VII. It is certain, that the deaths and ſufferings of the primitive Chriſtians had a great ſhare in the converſion of thoſe learned Pagans, who lived in the ages of perſecution, which, with ſome intervals and abatements, laſted near 300 years after our Saviour. Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius, and others, tell us, that this firſt of all alarmed their curioſity, roufed their attention, and made them ſeriouſly inquiſitive into the nature of that religion, which could endue the mind with ſo much ſtrength, and overcome the fear of death, nay, raiſe an earneſt deſire of it, though it appeared in all its terrors. This they found had not been effected by all the doctrines of thoſe philoſophers, whom they had thoroughly ſtudied, and who had been labouring at this great point. The ſight of theſe dying and tormented martyrs engaged them to ſearch into the hiſtory and doctrines of him for whom they ſuffered. The more they ſearched, the more they were convinced; till their conviction grew ſo ſtrong, that they themſelves embraced the ſame truths, and either actually laid down their lives, or were always in a readineſs to do it, rather than depart from them.

SECTION VIII.

I. *The completion of our Saviour's prophecies confirmed Pagans in their belief of the Goſpel.*

II. *Origen's obſervation on that of his diſciples being brought before kings and governors.*

III. *On their being perſecuted for their religion;*

IV. *On their preaching the goſpel to all nations;*

V. *On the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and ruin of the Jewiſh œconomy.*

VI. *Theſe arguments ſtrengthened by what has happened ſince Origen's time.*

I. THE ſecond of thoſe extraordinary means, of great uſe to the learned and inquiſitive Pagans of the three firſt centuries, for evincing the truth of the hiſtory of our Saviour, was the completion of ſuch prophecies as are recorded of him in the Evangeliſts. They could not indeed form any arguments from what he foretold, and was fulfilled during his life, becauſe both the prophecy and the completion were over before they were publiſhed by the Evangeliſts; though, as Origen obſerves, what end could there be in forging ſome of theſe predictions, as that of St. Peter's denying his maſter, and all his diſciples forſaking him in the greateſt extremity, which reflects ſo much ſhame on the great Apoſtle, and on all his companions? Nothing but a ſtrict adherence to truth, and to matters of fact, could have prompted the Evangeliſts to relate a circumſtance

ſo diſadvantageous to their own reputation, as that father has well obſerved.

II. But to purſue his reflexions on this ſubject. There are predictions of our Saviour recorded by the Evangeliſts, which were not completed till after their deaths, and had no likelihood of being ſo when they were pronounced by our bleſſed Saviour. Such was that wonderful notice he gave them, that 'they ſhould be brought 'before governors and kings for his ſake, for a teſtimony againſt 'them and the Gentiles,' Matt. x. 28. with the other like prophecies, by which he foretold that his diſciples were to be perſecuted. 'Is there any other doctrine in the world,' ſays this father, 'whoſe 'followers are puniſhed? can the enemies of Chriſt ſay, that he knew 'his opinions were falſe and impious, and that therefore he might 'well conjecture and foretell what would be the treatment of thoſe 'perſons who ſhould embrace them? Suppoſing his doctrines were 'really ſuch, why ſhould this be the conſequence? what likelihood 'rhat men ſhould be brought before kings and governors for opi-'nions and tenets of any kind, when this never happened even to 'the Epicureans, who abſolutely denied a Providence; nor to the 'Peripateticks themſelves, who laughed at the prayers and ſacrifices 'which were made to the Divinity? Are there any but the Chriſtians, 'who, according to this prediction of our Saviour, being brought 'before kings and governors for his ſake, are preſſed to their lateſt 'graſp of breath, by their reſpective judges, to renounce Chriſtian-'ity, and to procure their liberty and reſt, by offering the ſame ſa-'crifices, and taking the ſame oaths that others did?'

III. Conſider the time when our Saviour pronounced theſe words, Matt. x. 32. 'Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I 'alſo confeſs before my Father which is in heaven: but whoſoever 'ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my father 'which is in heaven.' Had you heared him ſpeak after this manner, when as yet his diſciples were under no ſuch trials, you would certainly have ſaid within yourſelf, "If theſe ſpeeches of Jeſus are true, and if, according to his prediction, governors and kings undertake to ruin and deſtroy thoſe who ſhall profeſs themſelves his diſciples, we will believe, not only that he is a prophet, but that he has received power from God ſufficient to preſerve and propagate his religion; and that he would never talk in ſuch a peremptory and diſcouraging manner, were he not aſſured that he was able to ſubdue the moſt powerful oppoſition that could be made againſt the faith and doctrine which he taught."

IV. Who is not ſtruck with admiration, when he repreſents to himſelf our Saviour at that time foretelling, that his goſpel ſhould be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations, or, as Origen (who rather quotes the ſenſe than the words), to ſerve for a conviction to kings and people, when at the ſame time he finds that his goſpel has accordingly been preached to Greeks and Barbarians, to the learned and to the ignorant, and that there is no quality or condition of life able to exempt men from ſubmitting to the doc-

trine

trine of Chriſt? 'As for us,' ſays this great author, in another part of his book againſt Celſus, 'when we ſee every day thoſe events exactly accompliſhed which our Saviour foretold at ſo great a diſtance, 'that "his Goſpel is preached in all the world," Matt. xxiv. 14. 'that "his diſciples go and teach all nations," 'Matt. xxviii. 19.' 'and that "thoſe who have received his doctrine are brought, for "his ſake, before governors and before kings," Matt. x. 18. 'we 'are filled with admiration, and our faith in him is confirmed more 'and more. What clearer and ſtronger proofs can Celſus aſk for 'the truth of what he ſpoke?'

V. Origen inſiſts likewiſe with great ſtrength on that wonderful prediction of our Saviour concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, pronounced at a time, as he obſerves, when there was no likelihood nor appearance of it. This has been taken notice of and inculcated by ſo many others, that I ſhall refer you to what this father has ſaid on the ſubject in the firſt book againſt Celſus; and as to the accompliſhment of this remarkable prophecy, ſhall only obſerve, that whoever reads the account given us by Joſephus, without knowing his character, and compares it with what our Saviour foretold, would think the hiſtorian had been a Chriſtian, and that he had nothing elſe in view but to adjuſt the event to the prediction.

VI. I cannot quit this head without taking notice that Origen would ſtill have triumphed more in the foregoing arguments, had he lived an age longer, to have ſeen the Roman emperors, and all their governors and provinces, ſubmitting themſelves to the Chriſtian religion, and glorying in its profeſſion, as ſo many kings and ſovereigns ſtill place their relation to Chriſt at the head of their titles.

How much greater confirmation of his faith would he have received, had he ſeen our Saviour's prophecy ſtand good in the deſtruction of the temple, and the diſſolution of the Jewiſh œconomy, when Jews and Pagans united all their endeavours, under Julian the apoſtate, to baffle and falſify the prediction? The great preparations that were made for rebuilding the temple, with the hurricane, earthquake, and eruptions of fire, that deſtroyed the work, and terrified thoſe employed in the attempt from proceeding in it, are related by many hiſtorians of the ſame age, and the ſubſtance of the ſtory teſtified both by Pagan and Jewiſh writers, as Ammianus Marcellinus, and Zamath David. The learned Chryſoſtom, in a ſermon againſt the Jews, tells them this fact was then freſh in the memories even of their young men, that it happened but twenty years ago, and that it was atteſted by all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, where they might ſtill ſee the marks of it in the rubbiſh of that work, from which the Jews deſiſted in ſo great a fright, and which even Julian had not the courage to carry on. This fact, which is in itſelf ſo miraculous, and ſo indiſputable, brought over many of the Jews to Chriſtianity, and ſhews us, that, after our Saviour's prophecy againſt it, the temple could not be preſerved from the plough paſſing over it, by all the care of Titus, who would fain have prevented its deſtruction; and that, inſtead of being re-edified by Julian, all his endea-

vours towards it did but ſtill more literally accompliſh our Saviour's prediction, that 'not one ſtone ſhould be left upon another.'

The ancient Chriſtians were ſo entirely perſuaded of the force of our Saviour's prophecies, and of the puniſhment which the Jews had drawn upon themſelves, and upon their children, for the treatment which the Meſſiah had received at their hands, that they did not doubt but they would always remain an abandoned and diſperſed people, an hiſſing and an aſtoniſhment among the nations, as they are to this day. In ſhort, that they had loſt their peculiarity of being God's people, which was now transferred to the body of Chriſtians, and which preſerved the church of Chriſt among all the conflicts, difficulties, and perſecutions, in which it was engaged, as it had preſerved the Jewiſh government and œconomy for ſo many ages, whilſt it had the ſame truth and vital principle in it, notwithſtanding it was ſo frequently in danger of being utterly aboliſhed and deſtroyed. Origen, in his fourth book againſt Celſus, mentioning their being caſt out of Jeruſalem, the place to which their worſhip was annexed, deprived of their temple and ſacrifice, their religious rites and ſolemnities, and ſcattered over the face of the earth, ventures to aſſure them with a face of confidence, that they would never be re-eſtabliſhed, ſince they had committed that horrid crime againſt the Saviour of the world. This was a bold aſſertion in the good man, who knew how this people had been ſo wonderfully re-eſtabliſhed in former times, when they were almoſt ſwallowed up, and in the moſt deſperate ſtate of deſolation, as in their deliverance out of the Babyloniſh captivity, and the oppreſſions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Nay, he knew that within leſs than a hundred years before his own time, the Jews had made ſuch a powerful effort for their re-eſtabliſhment under Barchocab, in the reign of Adrian, as ſhook the whole Roman empire. But he founded his opinion on a ſure word of prophecy, and on the puniſhment they had ſo juſtly incurred; and we find, by a long experience of 1500 years, that he was not miſtaken, nay that his opinion gathers ſtrength daily, ſince the Jews are now at a greater diſtance from any probability of ſuch a re-eſtabliſhment, than they were when Origen wrote.

SECTION IX.

I. *The lives of primitive Chriſtians, another means of bringing learned Pagans into their religion.*
II. *The change and reformation of their manners.*
III. *This looked upon as ſupernatural by the learned Pagans;*
IV. *And ſtrengthened the accounts given of our Saviour's life and hiſtory.*
V. *The Jewiſh prophecies of our Saviour an argument for the Heathens belief:*
VI. *Purſued:*
VII. *Purſued.*

I, THERE was one other means enjoyed by the learned Pagans of the three firſt centuries, for ſatisfying them in the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, which I might have ſtung under one of the fore-

going heads; but as it is so shining a particular, and does so much honour to our religion, I shall make a distinct article of it, and only consider it with regard to the subject I am upon: I mean, the lives and manners of those holy men, who believed in Christ during the first ages of Christianity. I should be thought to advance a paradox, should I affirm that there were more Christians in the world during those times of persecution, than there are at present in these which we call the flourishing times of Christianity. But this will be found an indisputable truth, if we form our calculation upon the opinions which prevailed in those days, that every one who lives in the habitual practice of any voluntary sin, actually cuts himself off from the benefits and profession of Christianity, and, whatever he may call himself, is in reality no Christian, nor ought to be esteemed as such.

II. In the times we are now surveying, the Christian religion shewed its full force and efficacy on the minds of men, and by many examples demonstrated what great and generous souls it was capable of producing. It exalted and refined its proselytes to a very high degree of perfection, and set them far above the pleasures, and even the pains, of this life. It strengthened the infirmity, and broke the fierceness, of human nature. It lifted up the minds of the ignorant to the knowledge and worship of Him that made them; and inspired the vicious with a rational devotion, a strict purity of heart, and an unbounded love to their fellow-creatures. In proportion as it spread through the world, it seemed to change mankind into another species of beings. No sooner was a convert initiated into it, but by an easy figure he became a new man, and both acted and looked upon himself as one regenerated and born a second time into another state of existence.

III. It is not my business to be more particular in the accounts of primitive Christianity, which have been exhibited so well by others; but rather to observe, that the Pagan converts, of whom I am now speaking, mention this great reformation of those who had been the greatest sinners, with that sudden and surprising change which it made in the lives of the most profligate, as having something in it supernatural, miraculous, and more than human. Origen represents this power in the Christian religion, as no less wonderful than that of curing the lame and blind, or cleansing the leper. Many others represent it in the same light, and looked upon it as an argument that there was a certain divinity in that religion, which shewed itself in such strange and glorious effects.

IV. This, therefore, was a great means not only of recommending Christianity to honest and learned Heathens, but of confirming them in the belief of our Saviour's history, when they saw multitudes of virtuous men daily forming themselves upon his example, animated by his precepts, and actuated by that Spirit which he had promised to send among his disciples.

V. But I find no argument made a stronger impression on the minds of these eminent Pagan converts, for strengthening their faith

in the hiſtory of our Saviour, than the predictions relating to him in thoſe old prophetic writings, which were depoſited among the hands of the greateſt enemies to Chriſtianity, and owned by them to have been extant many ages before his appearance. The learned Heathen converts were aſtoniſhed to ſee the whole hiſtory of their Saviour's life publiſhed before he was born, and to find that the Evangeliſts and Prophets, in their accounts of the Meſſiah, differed only in point of time, the one foretelling what ſhould happen to him, and the other deſcribing thoſe very particulars as what had actually happened. This our Saviour himſelf was pleaſed to make uſe of as the ſtrongeſt argument of his being the promiſed Meſſiah, and without it would hardly have reconciled his diſciples to the ignominy of his death, as in that remarkable paſſage which mentions his converſation with the two diſciples on the day of his reſurrection, St. Luke xxiv. 13. to the end.

VI. The Heathen converts, after having travelled through all human learning, and fortified their minds with the knowledge of arts and ſciences, were particularly qualified to examine theſe prophecies with great care and impartiality, and without prejudice or prepoſſeſſion. If the Jews, on the one ſide, put an unnatural interpretation on theſe prophecies, to evade the force of them in their controverſies with the Chriſtians; or if the Chriſtians, on the other ſide, overſtrained ſeveral paſſages in their application of them, as it often happens among men of the beſt underſtanding, when their minds are heated with any conſideration that bears a more than ordinary weight with it; the learned Heathens may be looked upon as neuters in the matter, when all theſe prophecies were new to them, and their education had left the interpretation of them free and indifferent. Beſides, theſe learned men among the primitive Chriſtians, knew how the Jews, who had preceded our Saviour, interpreted theſe predictions, and the ſeveral marks by which they acknowledged the Meſſiah would be diſcovered, and how thoſe of the Jewiſh Doctors who ſucceeded him had deviated from the interpretations and doctrines of their forefathers, on purpoſe to ſtifle their own conviction.

VII. This ſet of arguments had therefore an invincible force with thoſe Pagan philoſophers who became Chriſtians, as we find in moſt of their writings. They could not diſbelieve our Saviour's hiſtory, which ſo exactly agreed with every thing that had been written of him many ages before his birth, nor doubt of thoſe circumſtances being fulfilled in him, which could not be true of any perſon that lived in the world beſides himſelf. This wrought the greateſt confuſion in the unbelieving Jews, and the greateſt conviction in the Gentiles, who every where ſpeak with aſtoniſhment of theſe truths they meet with in this new magazine of learning which was opened to them, and carry the point ſo far as to think whatever excellent doctrine they had met with among Pagan writers, had been ſtolen from their converſation with the Jews, or from the peruſal of theſe writings which they had in their cuſtody.

DESTRUC-

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Josephus, with his testimony at large to the fulfilment of our Saviour's predictions concerning the destruction of the temple, and the city of Jerusalem, and the miseries coming upon the Jewish people.

His time, works, and character.

I. JOSEPHUS, son of Matthias, of the race of the Jewish Priests and of the first course of the four and twenty, by his mother descended from the Asmonean family, which for a considerable time had the supreme government of the Jewish nation, was born in the first year of the reign of Caligula, of our Lord 37*.

He was educated together † with Matthias, who was his own brother, by father and mother, and made such proficience in knowledge, that when ‡ he was about fourteen years of age, the high-priests and some of the principal men of the city came frequently to him to consult him about the right interpretation of things in the law. In the sixteenth year of his age, he retired into the wilderness, where he lived three years an abstemious course of life in the company of Banus. Having fully acquainted himself with the principles of the three sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essens, he determined to follow the rule of the Pharisees. And being now nineteen years of age, he began to act in public life.

Felix, when procurator of Judea, sent some priests of his acquaintance for a trifling offence to Rome, to be tried before Cæsar. Josephus, hearing that they behaved well, resolved to go to Rome, to plead their cause. But he had a bad voyage. The ship was wrecked. And out of 600 persons, not more than eighty were saved. Soon after his arrival at Rome, he became acquainted with Aliturias, a Jew by birth, but a stage-player, in favour with Nero. By him he was introduced to Poppea, the emperor's wife: by whose interest he procured, that the priests should be set at liberty. Josephus, who never omits what may be to his own honour, adds, that § beside that favour, he also received from Poppea many valuable presents. And then he returned home. This voyage was made, as ‖ he says, in the 26th year of his age, which must have been in the 62d or 63d year of ** Christ.

Upon his return to Judea he found things in great confusion, many †† being elevated with hopes of advantage by a revolt from the Ro-

* Joseph. in vita sua, cap. i. † Cap. 2.

‡ Ἔτη δὲ παῖς ὢν περὶ τεσσαρεσκαιδέκατον ἔτος . . . συνιόντων ἀεὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν τῆς πόλ. ὡς πρώτου ὑπὲρ τοῦ πρὸ ἡμῶν περὶ τῶν νομίμων ἀκριβοῦν τι γνῶναι. Cap. 2.

§ Τὰ μεγάλα δὲ ἀκριβῶν πρὸς τὴν εὐεργέτιδα τοῦτο τὴν τυχὼν παρὰ Ποππαίας. Cap. 3.

‖ Μετ' εἰκοστὸν καὶ ἕκτον ἐνιαυτὸν εἰς Ῥώμην με συνέπιστεν ἀναπλεῖν. Ib.

** Felix must have been removed from his government some while before that. Which may be thought to create a difficulty in this account. But it may be observed, that Josephus had heard of the good behaviour of those priests at Rome before he left Judea. Consequently, they had been some while at Rome before he set out on his journey.

†† . . ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἐπὶ τῷ Ῥωμαίων ἀποστάσει μέγα φρονήσας. Vit. c. 4.

mans. He says, he did what lay in his power to prevent it, though in vain.

Soon after the beginning of the war, in the year of Christ 66 (when he must have been himself about thirty years of age), he was sent from Jerusalem, to command in * Galilee. Where, having ordered matters as well as he could, and made the best preparations for war by fortifying the cities, in case of an attack from the Romans, he was at length shut up in the city of Jotapata: which, after a vigorous defence, and a siege of seven and forty days, was taken by Vespasian †, on the first day of July, in the 13th year of Nero, and the 67th of our Lord.

When that city was taken, by Vespasian's order, strict search was made for Josephus. For, if ‡ that general was once taken, he reckoned, that the greatest part of the war would be over. However, he had hid himself in a deep cavern, the opening of which was not easily discerned above ground. Here he met with forty persons of eminence, who had concealed themselves, and had with them provisions enough for several days. On the third day the Roman soldiers seized a woman, that had been with them. She made a discovery of the place where they were. Whereupon Vespasian sent two tribunes, inviting him to come up, with assurances, that his life should be preserved. Josephus, however, refused. Vespasian therefore sent a third tribune, named Nicanor, well known to Josephus, with the like assurances. Josephus, after some hesitation, was then willing to surrender himself. But the men, who were with him, exclaimed against it, and were for killing him and themselves, rather than come alive into the hands of the Romans. Hereupon he made a long speech to them, shewing, that it was not lawful for men to kill themselves, and that it was rather a proof of pusillanimity, than courage. But all without effect. He then proposed an expedient, which was, that they should cast lots, two by two, who should die first. He who had the second lot should kill the first; and the next, him; and so on; and the last should kill himself. It happened, that Josephus and another were preserved to the last lot. When all the rest were killed, he without much difficulty persuaded that other person to yield up himself to the Romans. So they two escaped with their § lives.

This ‖ has been judged to be a remarkable providence, by which Josephus was preserved to write the history, of which we are now able to make so good use.

When ** Josephus had surrendered, Vespasian gave strict orders, that he should be kept carefully, as if he had intended to send him to Nero. Josephus then presented a request, that he might speak to Vespasian in private. Which was granted. When all were dis-

* Vit. cap. 7. 8. De B. J. l. 2. c. 20. † De B. J. l. 3. cap. 7. Conf. cap. 8. § 9.
‡ αιτίαν γὰρ ἦν μοίρα τῶν τελείων ληφθείς. De B. J. l. 3. c. 8. in.
§ De B. J. l. 3. c. 8. §. 1. . . 7.
‖ See Tillotson's Serm. numb. 186. vol. II. p. 564.
** De B. J. l. 3. c. 8. §. 8.

missed,

miſſed, except Titus, and two friends; he ſpoke to Veſpaſian after this manner. "You * think, Veſpaſian, that you have in Joſe-"phus a mere priſoner. But I am come to you as a meſſenger of "great tidings. Had I not been ſent to you by God, I † know "what the law of the Jews is, and how it becomes a general to die. "Do you intend to ſend me to Nero? are they, who are to ſucceed "Nero before you, to continue? You, Veſpaſian, will be Cæſar: "you will be emperour. So will likewiſe this your ſon. Bind "me therefore ſtill faſter, and reſerve me for yourſelf. For you are "Lord not of me only, but of the earth, and the ſea, and all man-"kind. And I for puniſhment deſerve a cloſer confinement, if I "ſpeak falſhood to you in the name of ‡ God." Veſpaſian, as he ſays, at firſt paid little regard to all this. But afterwards his expectations of empire were raiſed. "Beſides, as he goes on to ſay, he "found Joſephus to have ſpoken truth upon other occaſions. For "when one of his friends, who were admitted to be preſent at that "interview, ſaid, it appeared ſtrange to him, that Joſephus ſhould "not have foretold to the people of Jotapata, the event of the "ſiege, nor have foreſeen his own captivity, if all he now ſaid was "not invention to ſave his own life: Joſephus anſwered, that he "had foretold to the people of Jotapata, that the place would be "taken upon the forty-ſeventh day of the ſiege, and that himſelf "ſhould be taken alive by the Romans. Veſpaſian having privately "inquired of the priſoners concerning theſe predictions, found the "truth of § them."

All theſe things I have inſerted here for ſhewing the character of this writer; though the prolixity of my naration be thereby increaſed.

It is very likely, that he ‖ often thought of Joſeph in Egypt, and of Daniel at Babylon: and was in hopes of making a like figure at the court of Rome. But I ſuppoſe, it may be no diſparagement to Joſephus, to ſay, that he was not equal to them in wiſdom, or in virtue and integrity. And the circumſtances of things were much altered. The promiſed Meſſiah was come. And the Jewiſh people were no longer entitled to ſuch ſpecial regard, as had been ſhewn them in times paſt. Nor was it then a day of favour and mercy for them, but the day of the Lord's vengeance againſt them, as Jo-

* De B. J. l. 3. c. 8. § 9.

† That is, that a Jewiſh general ſhould make away with himſelf, rather than be taken priſoner alive by heathen people. We know not of any ſuch law in the books of the Old Teſtament. And it ſeems to be a manifeſt contradiction to what he ſays in the ſpeech before referred to.

‡ Joſephus's addreſs to Veſpaſian is very preciſe and formal, predicting things then future. Poſſibly, this ſpeech was improved afterwards, and at the time of writing this hiſtory made more clear, and expreſs, and more agreeable to the event, than when firſt ſpoken.

§ Among other preſages of Veſpaſian's empire, Suetonius has mentioned this of Joſephus. "Et unus ex nobilibus captivis Joſephus, cum conjiceretur in vincula, conſtantiſſime "aſſeveravit, fore, ut ab eodem brevi ſolveretur, verum jam imperatore." Sueton. Veſpaſ. cap. 5.

‖ Joſephus has ſeveral times ſpoken of his having had prophetic dreams, and of his ability to interpret dreams that were ambiguous. Vid. De B. J. l. 3. viii. 3. et 9. et de Vit. § 42.

ſephus

sephus himself saw. And they were entering into a long captivity, of which they have not yet seen the end, after a period of almost seventeen hundred years, though they are still wonderfully preserved.

Josephus was still a prisoner. But, when Vespasian had been proclaimed emperor, he ordered his iron chain to be cut * asunder. When Vespasian went to Rome, Josephus continued to be with Titus, and was present at the siege of Jerusalem, and saw the ruin of his city and country.

After the war was over, when Titus went to Rome, he went with him. And Vespasian allotted him an apartment in the same house in which himself had lived before he came to the empire. He also made him a citizen of Rome, and gave him an annual pension, and continued to shew him great respect, so long as he lived. His son Titus, who succeeded him, shewed him the like regard. And afterwards Domitian, and his wife Domitia, did him many kind † offices.

Josephus, however, does not deny, that ‡ he had many enemies. But the emperors, in whose time he lived, protected him. Indeed, it is very likely, that the Jews should have little regard for a man, who was with the Romans in their camp during the siege of their city. He particularly says, that § upon the first tidings of the taking of Jotapata, the people of Jerusalem made great and public lamentations for him, supposing, that he had been killed in the siege. But when they heard, that he had escaped, and was with the Romans, and was well used by them, they loaded him with all manner of reproaches, not excepting treachery itself. Nor do we find, that ‖ the Jewish people ever had any great respect for his writings: though they have been much esteemed, and often quoted by Christian and ** other writers in early and later times.

Of them †† we are now to take some notice.

The first is "the History of the Jewish war," and the taking of Jerusalem, in seven books. In which work he goes back to the times of Antiocus Epiphanes, and the Maccabees. In the preface he says, that he ‡‡ first wrote it in the language of his own country, for the sake of such as lived in Parthia, Babylonia, Arabia, and other parts, and afterwards published it in Greek for the benefit of others: which is what we have. It is generally supposed to have been published by him in the 75th year of Christ, and the 38th year of his own age. He professeth to have writ with great §§ fidelity. And for the truth of his

* De B. J. l. 4. cap. x. § 7. † Vit. cap. 76. ‡ Ibid.

§ De B. J. l. 3. cap. ix. § 7.

‖ Quamvis enim ejus scripta apud Judæos in nullo pretio fuerint. . . Gentiles tamen pariter et Christiani Josephum, licet Judæum, ejusque opera, magni æstimarunt. Ittig. Proleg. pag. 83. ap. Havercamp.

** Josephus is quoted by Prophyry, not in his books against the Christians, but elsewhere. See the testimonies prefixed to the works of Josephus.

†† Particular accounts of them are to be seen in Cave, Hist. Lit. Fabric. Bib Gr. l. 4. cap. 6. Tom. 3. p. 228. &c. Tillemont, La Ruine des Juifs, art. 79. &c. Hist. des Emp. Tom. i.

‡‡ De B. J. L. i. in Pro. § 2. §§ In Pr. § 5. &c. et l. 7. cap. ult. fin.

history

hiſtory appeals to Veſpaſian, and Titus, and king Agrippa *, then living. He † preſented it to Veſpaſian and Titus. Which laſt ‡ not only deſired the publication of it, but with his own hand ſigned the book that ſhould be reckoned authentic.

2. "The Jewiſh antiquities," in twenty books, or the hiſtory of the Jews from the creation of the world to the twelfth year of Nero, in which the war began. This work was finiſhed by him § in the 56th year of his own life, in the third year of the reign of Domitian, and the year of Chriſt 93.

3. To this work is ſubjoined, as a part of it, or an appendix to it, "His Life," written by himſelf ſome while afterwards.

4. After the ſeveral above-mentioned works, he publiſhed another work, in two books, entituled "of the antiquity of the Jews, againſt "Apion:" being a vindication of the Jewiſh people againſt the calumnies of that Egyptian author.

5. To Joſephus likewiſe is generally aſcribed a book, intituled, "A "diſcourſe of the Maccabees." But, as ‖ Cave ſays, there is good reaſon to doubt of it's genuineneſs. And ** Mr. Whiſton, who made an Engliſh tranſlation of all the above named works of this writer, declined to tranſlate this, and would not publiſh it among the reſt.

The works of Joſephus, notwithſtanding many things in them liable to exception, which may be obſerved by careful and impartial readers, are very valuable. In his larger work, the "Jewiſh anti-"quities," he confirms the truth of the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament. And, as in ſeveral of the laſt books of that work he has brought down the Jewiſh hiſtory from the ceaſing of prophecy among them to the twelfth of Nero, he has let us know the ſtate of affairs in Judea, during the time of the evangelical hiſtory. And he had before done the like in the firſt two books of the "Jewiſh war." What he has therein ſaid of Herod, and his ſons, of the Roman governors in Judea, the Jewiſh ſects, and their principles, the manners of the Jewiſh people, and likewiſe concerning the Samaritans, greatly confirms and illuſtrates the hiſtory of our Evangeliſts. As was formerly ſhewn in the firſt part of this work, the "Credibility of the "Goſpel-hiſtory:" the deſign of which was to confirm the facts occaſionally mentioned in the New Teſtament by paſſages of ancient †† authors.

We are now to conſider, whether there is any thing in the works of this Jewiſh author more directly confirming the principal facts of the New Teſtament: particularly, whether he affords any evidence

* In Vit. cap. 65. Adv. Ap. l. i. c. 9.

† Ἀλλ' ἀυτοῖς ἀπέδωκα τοῖς ἀυτοκράτορσι τὰ βιβλία. Vit. § 65. Conf. Adv. Ap. ut ſupr.

‡ ὥστε χαρίζεσθαι τῇ ἐαυτοῦ χειρὶ τὰ βιβλία ὑπομοσιεύσισθαι προσέταξεν. Vit. § 65.

§ Ant. l. 20. cap. ult. fin.

‖ "Nihilominus an genuinum ſit Joſephi opus, juſta eſt dubitandi ratio." Cav. H. L. de Joſepho, p. 35.

** See his note at the end of his tranſlation of Joſephus.

†† "Quam in multis capitibus Evangeliſtarum narrationi ſuffragetur Joſephus, erudite "nuper demonſtravit Nathanael Lardnerus in opere Anglice edito, de Fide Hiſtoriæ "Evangelicæ." Lond. 1727, 8vo. 2 vols. J. A. Fabric. Lux Evangelii, p. 16. not. (a).

of

of the fulfilment of our Lord's predictions concerning the deſtruction of the temple and city of Jeruſalem, and the great calamities coming upon the Jewiſh people: and whether he has ſaid any thing of John the Baptiſt, our Lord's fore-runner, or of our Lord himſelf, or of any of his Apoſtles.

I ſhall begin with the firſt article. For it is very likely, that in his "hiſtory of the Jewiſh war," we ſhould find many things giving credit to the fulfilment of our Lords predictions concerning the Jewiſh people.

II. STATE OF JUDEA, IN OUR SAVIOUR'S TIME AND BEFORE.

Judea was firſt brought into ſubjection to the Romans by Pompey, who, after a ſiege of three months, took Jeruſalem in the year 63 before the Chriſtian æra, about the time of our * Midſummer. Joſephus always dates † the loſs of their liberty at that time. The ſame is ſaid by ‡ Tacitus.

But though the Jewiſh people then became ſubject to the Romans; and it may be ſaid, that from that time forward the rod of heaven hung over them; they enjoyed many privileges, and the freedom of their worſhip, under the mild government of thoſe maſters: as appears both from Joſephus, and from the hiſtorical books of the New Teſtament.

When Pompey became maſter of Jeruſalem, he § and ſome of his officers entered into the temple, and the moſt holy places of it. But he took nothing away. There were then in it the table, the candleſtick, with its lamps, the pouring veſſels, and the cenſers, all of gold, and great quantities of ſpices, and two thouſand talents in money. All which he left untouched. And the day after he gave orders, that they who had the charge of the temple ſhould cleanſe it, and perform the accuſtomed ſacrifices. And he reſtored the prieſthood to Hyrcanus.

And that after this the Jewiſh people were, ſometimes at leaſt, in a flouriſhing condition, appears from many conſiderations. It was during this period, that ‖ Herod repaired the temple. Excepting the cloud of glory with which the firſt temple had been favoured, that erected by Herod may be reckoned to have been equal to it in the ſplendour and magnificence of the building, and in rich and coſtly preſents, and other ornaments.

When the Jewiſh people, after their return from the Babyloniſh captivity, laid the foundation of the new houſe, "many of the Prieſts, "the Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, "wept with a loud voice." Ezr. iii. 12. But God encouraged them

* See Prideaux, in the year before Chriſt, 63, p. 439. And Joſeph. Antiq. l. 14. cap. iv. 4. De B. J. l. 1. cap. vii. § 6.

† Τότε τὸ πάθος τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις αἴτιοι παλίσσεσαν Ὑρκανὸς καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος πρὸς ἀλλήλους στασιάζοντες. Τήν τε γὰρ ἐλευθερίαν ἀπεκάλομεν, καὶ ὑπήκοοι Ῥωμαίων καὶ ἐσμεν. Antiq. l. 14. iv. 5. And compare what Agrippa ſays to the Jews at Jeruſalem. D. B. J. l. 2. cap. xvi. 4. p. 187.

‡ "Romanorum primus Cn. Pompeius Judæos domuit, templumque jure victoriæ ingreſſus eſt." Tacit. H. E. 5. c. 9.

§ De B. J. l. 1. cap. vii. 6. Conf. Antiq. l. 14. cap. iv.

‖ Vid. Antiq. l. 15. cap. xi. De B. J. l. 1. cap. xxi. et l. 5. cap. v.

by

by the prophet Haggai, in this manner; ch. ii. 3. "Who is left "among you, that saw this house in it's first glory? and how do ye "see it now? is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as no- "thing? yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord. . . . and "be strong all ye people of the land, and work: for I am with you, "saith the Lord of hosts. . . For thus saith the Lord of hosts, . . I "will shake all nations. And the desire of all nations shall come. "And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of "hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of "the former, saith the Lord of hosts. And in this place will I give "peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

Here is, undoubtedly, a renewal of the great promise concerning the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah, whose presence would make this second temple more glorious than the first. But here is also a gracious assurance of external grandeur and splendour. "Sil- "ver and gold, and all the riches of the world, says God, are mine, "to bestow on whom I please. And notwithstanding the present "mean and despicable appearance of the building before your eyes; "I will fill it with glory, and will cause it to equal, or even sur- "pass, the former in splendour and magnificence. . . For in this place "will I give peace.' My purpose is to bless you abundantly, and to "give you great prosperity." Which gracious declaration was ful- filled.

That they were in flourishing circumstances at the time of our Lord's preaching among them, is apparent: though they were un- easy under subjection to the Romans. Josephus continually speaks of the temple, as very grand and magnificent. And it appears to be so from his large and particular description of it in the fifth chapter of the fifth book of the Jewish War, just before it's final ruin. And when Titus, upon the fire having seized the temple, entered it, with some of his officers, he says, "that * Titus saw it to be far supe- "rior to the report of strangers, and not inferior to our boastings "concerning it." And, having related how it was burnt, he says, it might be justly lamented: "since † it was the most admirable "of all the works, which we have seen, or heard of, for it's curi- "ous structure, and magnitude, and for all the wealth bestowed up- "on it, as well as for the reputation of it's sanctity," And he ex- presly calls it ‡ the temple, that was built, or begun to be built, in the second year of Cyrus, under the direction of the prophet Haggai. And our Lord's disciples bear witness to the same in some passages that will come before us in reciting his predictions, of which we are now to take notice, and then observe the fulfillment of them.

* παρελθὼν μετὰ τῶν ἡγεμόνων ἐνέδυ ἐθεάσατο τὸ ναὸν τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ πολὺ μὲν τῆς παρὰ τοῖς ἀλλοφύλοις φήμης ἀμείνω, τοῦ δὲ κόμπου καὶ τῆς παρ' οἰκείοις δόξης οὐκ ἐλάττω. De B. J. l. 6. cap. iv. 7.

† L. 6. iv. 8. Conf. l. 6. x. fin.

‡ ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ὑστέρου, ἣν ἔτει δευτέρῳ Κύρου βασιλεύοντος ἐποιήσατο Ἀγγαῖος. L. 6. c. iv. 3.

III. OUR

III. Our Lord's predictions concerning the calamities, coming upon the Jewish nation.

We find our Lord's disciples speaking of the magnificence of the temple with admiration. So in Mark xiii. 1—10. "And as he "went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him: Master, "see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here! And "Jesus answering said unto him: seest thou these great buildings? "There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be "thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives over "against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, "asked him privately: Tell us, when shall these things be; and what "shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus "answering them began to say: Take heed, lest any man deceive you. "For many will come in my name, and say: I am Christ. And "will deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours "of wars, be ye not troubled. For such things must needs be. But "the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and "kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be earthquakes in di-"vers places. And there shall be famines and troubles. These are "the beginnings of sorrows... And the Gospel must first be published "among all nations." And ver. 14—20. "But when ye shall "see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, "standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand:) "then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains. And let "him that is on the house-top, not go down into the house, neither "enter therein, or take any thing out of his house. And let him "that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. "But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck "in those days. And pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter. "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the "begining of the creation, which God created, unto this time. Nei-"ther shall be."

The like things are in St. Matthew xxiv. 1—35. "And Jesus "went out, and departed from the temple. And his disciples came "to him, for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus "said unto them: See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, "there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not "be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the "disciples came unto him privately, saying: Tell us, when these "things shall be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of "the end of the world? And Jesus answered, and said unto them: "Take heed, that no man deceive you. For many will come in "my name, saying, I am Christ. And will deceive many. And ye will "hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that ye be not troubled. "For all these things must come to pass. But the end is not yet. "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. "And there will be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in "divers places. All these are the beginings of sorrows. Then shall

"they

" they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you. And ye " will be hated of all nations for my name ſake. And then will " many be offended, and will betray one another, and will hate one " another. And many falſe prophets will ariſe, and will deceive " many. And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many will " wax cold. But he that ſhall endure to the end, ſhall be ſaved. " And this Goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world, " for a witneſs unto all nations. And then ſhall the end come. " When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, ſpoken " of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place, (whoſo readeth, " let him underſtand:) then let them which are in Judea flee to " the mountains. Let him which is on the houſe-top, not come " down to take any thing out of his houſe. Neither let him that is " in the field return back, to take his cloaths. And woe unto them " which are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. " But pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the " ſabbath-day. For then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not " from the beginning of the world to this time: no, nor ever ſhall " be. And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortened, there ſhould no " fleſh be ſaved. But for the elects ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhort- " ened. Then, if any ſay unto you: Lo, here is Chriſt, or there: " believe it not. For there will ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Pro- " phets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that (if " it were poſſible) they ſhould deceive the very elect. Behold, I " have told you before. Wherefore, if they ſhall ſay unto you, " Behold he is in the deſert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the " ſecret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out " of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt, ſo ſhall alſo the com- " ing of the Son of man be. For wherefover the carcaſs is, there " will the eagles be gathered together... Verily, I ſay unto you, " This generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be fulfilled. " Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away. But my words ſhall not paſs " away."

Thoſe inquiries of the diſciples, and our Lord's anſwers to them, are made in private. But they plainly refer to things ſaid by our Lord publicly in the courts of the temple. We may do well, therefore, to look back to what precedes, as related in St. Matthew's Goſpel eſpecially. Where are recorded the many woes pronounced by our Lord upon the Scribes and Phariſees, and the people in general, who were under their influence and direction. Matt. xxiii. 29—39. " Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: becauſe ye " build the tombs of the Prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the " righteous. And ye ſay, if we had been in the days of our fathers, " we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the " Prophets. Wherefore * ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves, that ye are " the children of them that killed the Prophets. Fill ye up then the " meaſure of your fathers. Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, " how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell! Wherefore behold I

* Compare Luke xi. 47. 51.

" ſend

" ſend unto you prophets, and wiſe men, and ſcribes. And ſome of " them ye will kill and crucify: and ſome of them ye will ſcourge " in your ſynagogues, and perſecute from city to city: that upon you " may come all the righteous blood, ſhed upon the earth, from the " blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, ſon of " Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the temple and the altar. Verily " I ſay unto you, All theſe things ſhall come upon this generation. " O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt " them that are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy " children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her " wings! and ye would not! Behold, your houſe is left unto you " deſolate. For I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, " till ye ſhall ſay: Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the " Lord.

The like things are recorded by St Luke, ch. xxi. 5—28. a part of which I ſhall alſo tranſcribe here. " And as ſome ſpake of the " temple, how it was adorned with goodly ſtones, and gifts, he ſaid: " As for theſe things, which ye behold, the days will come, in the " which ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be " thrown down. And they aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, but when " ſhall theſe things be? and what ſigns will there be when theſe " things ſhall come to paſs? And he ſaid: Take heed, that ye be not " deceived. For many will come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, " and the time draws near. Go ye not therefore after them. But " when ye ſhall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified. For " theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs. But the end is not by and by. " Then ſaid he unto them: Nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and king- " dom againſt kingdom. And great earthquakes ſhall be in divers " places, and famines, and peſtilences, and fearful ſights, and great " ſigns ſhall there be from heaven. But before all theſe things they " ſhall lay their hands upon you, and perſecute you, delivering you " up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before " Kings and Rulers for my name ſake. And it ſhall turn to you " for a teſtimony.... And ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents, and " brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends. And ſome of you ſhall they " cauſe to be put to death. And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my " name ſake. But there ſhall not an hair of your head periſh. In " your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls. And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſa- " lem compaſſed with armies; then know, that the deſolation thereof " is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains: " and let them which are in the midſt of it, depart out. And let " not them which are in the country, enter thereinto. For theſe " are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be " fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them " that give ſuck in thoſe days. For there will be great diſtreſs in " the land, and wrath upon this people. And they ſhall fall by the " edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations. " And Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, untill the " times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

And

And before this, when he was making his public entrance into Jeruſalem, ſays St. Luke xix. 41—44. "And when he was come near, "he beheld the city, and wept over it, ſaying: If thou hadſt known, "even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to "thy peace! But now they are hid from thy eyes; for the days will "come upon thee, that thy enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, "and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide, and will "lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee. And "they will not leave in thee one ſtone upon another, becauſe thou "kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation."

And afterwards, when they were leading him away to be crucified, Luke xxiii. 25.—31. "And there followed him a great company "of people, and of women: which alſo bewailed, and lamented him. "But Jeſus turning unto them ſaid: Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep "not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children. "For behold the days are coming, in the which they will ſay: "Bleſſed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the "paps which never gave ſuck. Then ſhall they begin to ſay to "the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For "if they do ſuch things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the "dry!"

Our Lord delivers theſe predictions, of which he had the foreſight, with marks of great and undiſſembled compaſſion and tenderneſs. If all theſe deſolations and calamities had been now preſent, and before his eyes, and if they had been the calamities of his beſt friends, he could not have been more affected. He is particularly touched with the foreſight of the difficulties of ſuch as are moſt helpleſs, the diſtreſſes of women with child, or who have infants at their breaſts. This is true compaſſion, the effect of the ſenſibility of the human nature; which he is not aſhamed of, and does not diſſemble. And that the apprehenſion of theſe calamities impending on the Jewiſh people lay much upon his mind, is manifeſt from his ſo often ſpeaking of them.

And there are references likewiſe to the calamities coming upon the Jewiſh people in divers parables. Luke xiii. 6—9. Matt. xxii. 1—12. Luke xiv. 17—24. Matt. xxi. 33—46. Mark xii. 1—12. Luke xx. 9—19. Luke xix. 11—27. Compare Matt. xxv. 14—30. and alſo in the miracle upon the barren fig-tree. Matt. xxi. 18, 19. Mark xi. 12, 13. and 20, 21.

In what has been tranſcribed from the Evangeliſts, are obſervable theſe ſeveral things.

1. Our Lord foretells the deſtruction of the temple and city of Jeruſalem.

2. He ſpeaks of great and extraordinary afflictions and diſtreſſes, which the Jewiſh people would ſuffer at that time.

3. He ſays, that the doctrine of the Goſpel ſhould be preached in all the world, or all over the Roman empire, before the final ruin and overthrow of the Jewiſh nation.

4. He foretells, that his disciples and followers would be brought before Kings and Governours for his name sake, and would suffer many hardships, and that some of them would be put to death.

5. He intimates, that among his followers there would be great declensions, and that they would betray each other.

6. He foretells, that there would be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.

7. He speaks of wars and tumults in many places, preceding the final ruin of the Jewish nation, and as preludes of it.

8. He likewise says, that at that time, and before it, would appear many false-prophets and impostors, by whom many would be deceived; and he warns men against harkening to them.

9. He declares, that all these things would come to pass, before the end of that age, or generation of men.

10. He forewarns and advises those who regarded their own welfare, to flee out of Judea and Jerusalem, when they perceived the near approach of the calamities which had been spoken of by him. Which they might know, when they should see the Roman armies, with their idolatrous ensigns, standing where they ought not, that is, near Jerusalem, or in the land of Judea.

Of all these several things I propose to shew the fulfillment: though not exactly in the order in which they have been just now mentioned.

IV. The dates of some events; namely, the commencement and duration of the war, and of the siege of Jerusalem, &c.

Before I enter upon the history of the fulfilment of these predictions, it may be of use to observe, in general, the dates of some events.

The war began, as * Josephus says, in the second year of the government of Gessius Florus, who succeeded Albinus, successor of Porcius Festus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, in the month of May, in the twelfth year of the Emperour Nero, and the seventeenth year of the reign of Agrippa, mentioned Acts xxv. and xxvii. that is, in the month of May, in the year of our Lord 66.

"The † Temple was burnt on the tenth day of the month of "August [in the year of Christ 70], the same day and month on "which it had been burnt by the King of Babylon." Which Josephus repeats again afterwards ‡.

* Καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔλαβεν ὁ πόλεμος δευτέρῳ μὲν ἔτει τῆς ἐπιτροπῆς Φλώρου, δωδεκάτῳ δὲ τῆς Νέρωνος ἀρχῆς. Ant. l. 20. xi. 1.

Καὶ προσελάμβανε τὴν ἀρχὴν ὁ πόλεμος δωδεκάτῳ μὲν ἔτει τῆς Νέρωνος ἡγεμονίας, ἑπλακαιδεκάτῳ δὲ τῆς Ἀγρίππα βασιλείας, Ἀρτεμισίου μηνός. De B. J. l. 2. cap. xiv. 4.

† Π ἐν δ' ἡ ἐμπρησθεῖσα χρόνων περιόδος ἡμέρᾳ δεκάτῃ Λῴου μηνὸς, καθ' ἣν καὶ τὸ πρότερον ὑπὸ τῶν Βαβυλωνίων βασιλέως ἐνεπρήσθη. De B. J. l. 6. iv. 5.

‡ Ὠκυμόρησε δ' ἐν τις ἐν αὐτῇ τῆς περιόδου τὴν ἀκρίβειαν· ᾗ μὴν γὲν. ὡς ἔλεγον, ᾗ ἡμέραν ἐπετήρησε τὴν αὐτὴν, ἐν ᾗ πρώτερον ὑπὸ Βαβυλωνίων ὁ νεὼς ἐνεπρήσθη... ἡ γέγονεν ἔτει δευτέρῳ τῆς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἡγεμονίας. Ib. § 8.

The

The * City was taken on the eighth day of September, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, or the year of Christ 70.

That was the end of the siege of Jerusalem, which began, as the same author † observes several times, about the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, or our April.

The war therefore lasted four years and four months, computing from May 66, to September in the year 70. And the siege lasted about five months, computing from the 14th day of April to the eighth of September, in the year 70. If we carry on our computation to the taking of the castle of Massada, which happened in the year 73 (as we shall see hereafter), the war lasted seven years.

V. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION STANDING IN THE HOLY PLACE.

I think it proper here also to take notice of our Lord's expressions concerning the sign, whereby the approach of these calamities might be discerned. Matt. xxiv. 15, 16. "When ye there-"fore shall see the abomination of desolation, . . . stand in the "holy place; then let them which be in Judea flee to the moun-"tains." Mark xiii. 14. "When ye shall see the abomination of "desolation standing where it ought not . . . then let them which are "in Judea flee to the mountains." Luke xxi. 20. "And when "ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know, that "the desolation thereof is nigh."

By "the abomination of desolation, or the abomination that "maketh desolate," therefore, is intended the Roman armies, with their ensigns. As the Roman ensigns, especially the eagle, which was carried at the head of every legion, were objects of worship; they are, according to the usual style of Scripture, called "an abo-"mination."

By "standing in the holy place, or where it ought not," needs not to be understood the temple only, but Jerusalem also, and any part of the land of Israel.

There are several things in Josephus, which will confirm this interpretation. "Pilate," ‡ says he, "the Prefect of Judea, sending "his army from Cesarea, and putting them into winter-quarters "at Jerusalem, brought the carved images of Cesar, which are in "the ensigns, into the city, in violation of the Jewish laws; since "our law forbids the making of images. For which reason the "former governors were wont to come into the city with en-"signs destitute of these ornaments. Pilate was the first, who set "up images in Jerusalem. And he did it privately, the army making "their entrance in the night-time. But as soon as the people knew "it, they went in a large body to Cesarea, making earnest supplica-"tions, that the images might be removed. . . . And at length

* Ἑαλὼ μὲν ἅτις Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐτε. δευτέρου τῆς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἡγεμονίας, Καισαρίων μηνὸς ὀγδόῳ. Ib. l. 6. cap. x. in.

† De B. J. l. 5. cap. iii. 1. cap. xiii. 7. l. 6. cap. ix. 3.

‡ Antiq. l. 18. cap. iii. § 1.

" Pilate gave orders, for bringing back the images from Jeruſa-
" lem to Ceſarea."

And not long after that, Vitellius, Preſident of Syria, received orders from Tiberius to attack Aretas, king of Petra. Whereupon he was going to march through Judea. " But * ſome of their " chief men waited on him, and entreated him, not to lead his " army through their country, becauſe it was contrary to their " laws, that any images ſhould be brought into it, whereas there " were a great many in his army. And he hearkened to them, " altered his intention, and marched his troops another way."

Our Lord's diſciples and followers therefore might well be alarmed as ſoon as they ſaw Roman armies, with their idolatrous enſigns, appear in an hoſtile manner in any part of the land of Iſrael: but, as they approached to Jeruſalem, the danger would be more imminent and preſſing.

And as men unwillingly leave their native country, and their accuſtomed habitations, and removals are always attended with dangers and difficulties, our Lord recommends flight in very urgent terms, leſt any of thoſe who loved him, and reſpected his doctrine, ſhould partake in the dreadful calamities of the ſiege.

VI. How the several events, foretold to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, came to pass. The Gospel preached all over the world.

We now obſerve ſome events ſpoken of by our Lord, which would precede the great calamity coming upon the Jewiſh nation.

1. One is, that " the doctrine of the Goſpel" ſhould be preached throughout the Roman Empire, and in other places adjoining to it.

" And this goſpel of the kingdom," ſays he, " ſhall be preached " in all the world, for a witneſs to all nations. And then ſhall " the end come." Matt. xxiv. 14. " And the Goſpel muſt firſt " be publiſhed to all nations." Mark xiii. 10.

And however unlikely that might ſeem when thoſe words were ſpoken by our Lord, they were verified. The Epiſtles of the New Teſtament, ſtill extant, and written to Chriſtians in divers cities and countries, are a ſtanding monument of it. For they are ſent to believers at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Epheſus, Philippi, Coloſſe, Theſſalonica, and the Hebrews. All written by St. Paul. And the Epiſtles of the Apoſtle Peter are directed to Chriſtians, reſiding in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia. And the four Goſpels, and the Acts of the Apoſtles, afford evidence, that there were numerous converts to the faith of Jeſus. For they were written for the uſe of ſuch. St. Paul ſays, Rom. xv. 19. that " from Jeru-
" ſalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the " Goſpel of Chriſt." He reminds the Romans, i. 18. " that their " faith was ſpoken of throughout the whole world." To the Coloſſians he obſerves, " that the Goſpel had been preached to every

* Antiq. l. 18. cap. v. 3.

" creature

"creature under heaven," ch. i. 23. and ſee ver. 6. The predic-tion therefore of that great event had been accompliſhed within the limits of the time aſſigned for it.

And Tacitus * bears witneſs, that the Chriſtian religion, which had its riſe in Judea, had ſpread into many parts, and had reached Rome itſelf, where the profeſſors of it were numerous, and many of them underwent grievous torments in the reign of Nero, about the year of our Lord 64, and afterwards.

2. CHRIST'S DISCIPLES PERSECUTED IN MANY PLACES.

Our Lord alſo ſays to his diſciples, in his prophetical diſcourſes concerning the coming calamities upon Judea: "Before all theſe "things they will lay their hands upon you, and perſecute you, de-"livering you to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought "before kings and rulers for my name ſake. ... And ſome of you "ſhall they cauſe to be put to death. And ye will be hated of all "men for my name ſake." Luke xxi. 12. and 16, 17. And to the like purpoſe in the other Evangeliſts.

The full accompliſhment of theſe things is well known to Chriſti-ans from the book of the Acts, and the Epiſtles of the New Teſta-ment. The Apoſtles of Jeſus met with great difficulties in preach-ing the Goſpel. And the converts made by them were expoſed to many ſufferings. Peter and John, and all the Apoſtles, were brought before the Jewiſh Council, and were impriſoned, and beaten, and farther threatened; Acts iv. Stephen, an eminent diſciple, and E-vangeliſt, ſuffered death by ſtoning, ch. vi, vii. James, the brother of John, was beheaded by king Agrippa; who alſo ſhut up Peter in priſon, with intention to put him to death alſo. But he was mira-culouſly delivered, ch. xii. Paul was kept in priſon two years in Judea, and afterwards as long at Rome. He pleaded before Felix and Feſtus, Roman governors in Judea, and king Agrippa the younger, as well as before the Jewiſh council at Jeruſalem; xxi—xxviii. And there is good reaſon to believe, that † he was brought before Nero himſelf. Many of his ſufferings and dangers are enu-merated in 2 Cor. xi. 23.—33,

They who received the doctrine taught by the Apoſtles had alſo their ſhare of afflictions and trials. Paul, whilſt he was their enemy, "made havock of the church, entering into every houſe, and haling "men and women committed them to priſon. And when they were "put to death, he gave his voice againſt them: .. he puniſhed them "in every ſynagogue, and perſecuted them even into ſtrange cities;" Acts viii. 3. and xxvi. 10, 11. And in his Epiſtle to the Hebrews he obſerves to them, "that they had endured a great fight of afflic-"tions, partly whilſt they were made a gazing-ſtock both by re-"proaches and afflictions; and partly whilſt they became companions

* Ann. l. 15. cap. 44.

† See that fully proved in the ſecond volume of the Supplement to the "Credibility," &c. p. 250, &c.

" of thoſe who were ſo uſed: and that they had joyfully taken the " ſpoiling of their goods;" ch. x. 32.—34. And Agrippa beforementioned began with "laying his hands upon certain of the church," Acts xii. 1. And that the believers ſuffered afflictions in other places beſide Judea, is manifeſt from 2 Theſſ. i. 3—6. James ii. 5—7. 2 Pet. iv. 12—19. And the Jews at Rome, whom Paul ſent for to come to him, ſay: " As concerning this ſect, we know that every " where it is ſpoken againſt."

Tacitus confirms the truth of theſe predictions of our Lord. He has given a particular account of the ſufferings of many Chriſtians at Rome, before the deſolations of Judea. In the tenth year of Nero, the 64th of our Lord, there happened a great fire at Rome. Nero was ſuſpected to have ſet it on fire himſelf. " For * ſuppreſ- " ſing that common rumour, Nero procured others to be accuſed, " and inflicted exquiſite puniſhments upon thoſe people, who were " in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the " name of Chriſtians." And he ſays, " that they were condemned, " not ſo much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity " to mankind." Thus Tacitus bears witneſs, not only to their undeſerved ſufferings, but alſo to the reproaches they underwent, agreeably to what our bleſſed Lord had ſaid, " that they would be " hated of all men for his name ſake." However, theſe innocent ſufferers had their ſupports. For their unerring Maſter, all whoſe words were true, has ſaid: " Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile " you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt " you falſely for my ſake."

3. Declensions among his followers.

Farther, our Lord intimates, that before the full accompliſhment of his predictions concerning the miſeries coming upon the Jewiſh nation, there would be declenſions of zeal among his own profeſſed diſciples and followers.

" And then ſhall many be offended, and ſhall betray one another; " and becauſe iniquity will abound, the love of many will wax " cold;" Matt. xxiv, 10. 12. And ſee Mark xiii. 12. 13. and Luke xxi. 16.

What is ſaid of this matter in the Goſpels may be verified from the Epiſtles of the New Teſtament. The whole Epiſtle to the Hebrews is an argument to ſtedfaſtneſs, implying the great danger of apoſtaſy from the faith, or of abatements of zeal for it: " Let us," ſays he, " hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering. " And let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and good " works, not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the " manner of ſome is." Heb x. 23. 25 and onwards to ver. 39. And ch. xii. 12. " Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, " and the feeble knees." In ch. vi. 4—9. he ſhews the great guilt,

* " Ergo abolendo rumori Nero ſubdidit reos, et exquiſitiſſimis pœnis affecit quos per flagitia inviſos, vulgus Chriſtianos appellabat. Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud perinde crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis convicti ſunt, &c." Ann. 15. c. 14.

" and

and the deplorable condition of such as apostatize. In his second epistle to Timothy, ch. i. 15. "This thou knowest," says he, "that "all they which are of Asia (probably meaning such as were then at "Rome) are turned away from me: of whom are Phygellus and Her-"mogenes. And afterwards, ch. iv. 16. he complains of other Christians at Rome, who deserted him, when he made his appearance there before Nero. "At my first answer," or apology, "no man stood "with me: but all men forsook me." And again, in the same Epistle, ch. ii. 17. he speaks of Hymeneus and Philetus: "who con-"cerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past, and "overthrow the faith of some." And see 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. I allege nothing more from the books of the New Testament.

Tacitus, in his account of Nero's persecution of the Christians, already quoted more than once, does also confirm the truth of this prediction of our Lord; who says, "that * at first they only were "apprehended, who confessed themselves to be of that sect. After-"wards, many more were taken up, whom they discovered to be "of their number."

Nor ought this to be thought exceeding strange, notwithstanding the perfection of the Christian doctrine, and the evidences of it's truth. For in a great number of men it is very likely that some should be overcome by the difficulties and dangers attending the profession of it. So says the chief power of his heavenly doctrine. Some "seed fell in stony places. The same is he that heareth the word, "and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself, "but endureth for a while. For when tribulation or persecution "ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

4. FAMINES IN DIVERS PLACES.

Our blessed Lord said, that before the great calamity predicted by him, there would be "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes "in divers places."

We know from the history in the Acts of the Apostles, that there was a famine in Judea in the time of the Emperor Claudius, ch. xi. 25. 30. It was not an accidental scarcity at Jerusalem only, but it was a famine all over that country. It began in the fourth year of that Emperor, and lasted several years. We have a particular account of it in † Josephus. He also says, it was a very severe ‡ famine. And in another place § he mentions the high price of corn at that season: and says, that this famine happened in the reign of Claudius, not long before the war.

That famine is also taken notice of by Eusebius in ‖ his Chronicle, and ** in his History, and by †† Orosius.

* "Igitur primo correpti, qui fatebantur: deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, &c." Ann. 15. c. 44.

† Ant. l. 20. ii. 6.

‡ Ἐπὶ τούτοις δὴ καὶ μέγαν λιμὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν συνέβη γενέσθαι. Ib. cap. v. 2.

§ καὶ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ δὲ τὰ πολέμια μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν, Κλαυδίου Ῥωμαίων ἄρχοντος, καὶ λιμὸν τὴν χώραν ἡμῶν καταλαβόντος, ὡς τεσσάρων δραχμῶν πωλεῖσθαι τὸν ἀσσαρῶνα. Ant. l. 3. xv. 3.

‖ Chr. p. 160 ** H. E. l. 2. cap. xii. †† Or. l. 7. cap. 6.

There was alſo a famine at Rome, and in Italy, mentioned * by Dion Caſſius, which began in the firſt year of Claudius, and continued in the next year.

There was another famine in the ſame reign, mentioned † by Tacitus, and ‡ Euſebius. Which ſeems to have been chiefly in the tenth or eleventh year of that Emperor.

To all theſe § Suetonius ſeems to refer, though he does not mention the years in which they happened.

Pestilences.

Concerning the famines in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, ſome ‖ modern hiſtorians and chronologers might be conſulted.

Our Lord ſpeaks alſo of peſtilences. By Joſephus we are informed, that about the year of Chriſt 40, there was ** a peſtilence at Babylon, in which the Jews ſuffered.

In the †† 65th year of the Chriſtian æra there was a great mortality at Rome. At the ſame time there were other calamities in divers parts of the Roman Empire, as we learn from Tacitus ‡‡, and Suetonius §§, as well as from Oroſius ‖‖, who might tranſcribe from them.

Earthquakes.

Tacitus *** ſpeaks of an earthquake at Rome in the time of Claudius, and of another ††† at Apamea in the ſame reign.

* Dio, l. l. 60. p. 671. al. 949.

† "Frugum quoque egeſtas, et orta ex eo fames, in prodigium accipiebatur." Tac. Ann. l. 12. c. 43.

‡ "Fames facta in Græcia. Modius ſex drachmis venundatus eſt.... Magna fames Romæ." Chr. p 160. infr. m.

§ "Arctiore autem annona propter aſſiduas ſterilitates," &c. Suet. Claud. cap. 18. Vid. et cap 19. et 20.

‖ Vid. Pagi, A. D. 72. n. vii. Reimariann. ad Dion Caſſ. p. 948. See alſo Credib. P. i. B. i. ch. x.

** .... λοιμὸς ἐν Βαβυλῶνι. ἐγένετο αὐτῶν. Ant. l. 18. ix. 8.

†† Vid. Pagi. A. D. 67. n. iii.

‡‡ "Tot facinoribus foedum annum etiam Dii tempeſtatibus et morbis inſignivere. Vaſtata "Campania turbine ventorum, qui villas, arbuſta, fruges paſſim disjecit, pertulitque violentiam ad vicina Urbi. In qua omne mortalium genus vis peſtilentiæ depopulabatur, nulla "coeli intemperie, quæ occurreret oculis. Sed domus corporibus exanimis, itinera funeribus "complebantur. Non ſexus, non ætas periculo vacua. Servitia perinde ac ingenua plebes "raptim exſtingui, inter conjugum et liberorum lamenta: qui dum aſſident, dum deflent, "ſæpe eodem rogo cremabantur. Equitum, Senatorumque interitus, quamvis promiſcui, "minus flebiles erant, tanquam communi mortalitate ſævitiam principis praevenirent." Tacit. Ann. 16 cap. 13.

§§ "Acceſſerunt tantis ex principe malis, probriſque, quædam et fortuita: peſtilentia "unius autumni, quo triginta funerum millia in rationem Libitinæ venerunt: clades Britannica, quâ duo præcipua oppida, magna civium ſociorumque cæde directa ſunt: ignominia ad Orientem, legionibus in Armenia ſub jugum miſſis, ægreque Syria retenta." Suetor. Nero. cap. 39.

‖‖ Oroſ. l. 7. cap. vii.

*** "Multa eo anno prodigia evenere. Inſeſſum diris avibus Capitolium: crebris terræ "motibus prorutæ domus." Ann. 12. cap. 43.

††† "Tribusque Apamienſibus terræ motu convulſis, in quinquennium remiſſum." Id. l. 12. cap. 58.

In

In the reign of Nero there was an earthquake at Laodicea, mentioned by * Tacitus: and likewiſe by † Euſebius in his Chronicle; who ſays, that in Aſia three cities, namely Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Coloſſe, were overturned by an earthquake. And in like manner ‡ Oroſius. Poſſibly, the earthquake, which was moſt violent at Laodicea, was felt in the other cities likewiſe.

In the ſame reign there was an earthquake in Campania, mentioned by § Tacitus, and ‖ Seneca. By the former it ſeems to be placed in the year of Chriſt 62; by the latter in the year 63.

And there may have been other earthquakes in the time of the juſt mentioned Emperours.

WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS.

5. Our Lord foretells "wars and commotions," preceding the final ruin; Matt. xxiv. 6. Mark xiii. 7. Luke xxi. 9.

Joſephus ** has a long ſtory of a diſturbance in Meſopotamia, occaſioned by the ambition and indiſcretion of two Jews, who were brothers. It ſeems to have happened †† about the year of Chriſt 40. Joſephus ſays, it ‡‡ was not inferior to any calamity which the Jews had ſuffered hitherto, and that §§ it occaſioned the death of more than fifty thouſand people.

When Cuſpius Fadus came Procurator into Judea, in the reign of Claudius, in the year of Chriſt 44 or 45, as ‖‖ Joſephus ſays, "he found the Jews in Peréa in a riot, fighting with the Philadelphians about the limits of the village Mia. And, indeed, the people of Peréa had taken up arms without the conſent of their chief men, and had killed a good number of the Philadelphians. When Fadus heard of it, he was much diſpleaſed, that they had taken up arms, and had not left the deciſion of the diſpute to him, if they thought the Philadelphians had done them any in-

* "Eodem anno ex illuſtribus Aſiæ urbibus Laodicea, tremore prolapſa, nullo a nobis remedio, propriis viribus revaluit." Ib. l. 14. c. 27.

† "In Aſia tres urbis terræ motu conciderunt. Laodicea, Hierapolis, Coloſſæ." Euſ. Chr. p. 161.

‡ Oroſ. l. 7. cap. vii.

§ "Iiſdemque Conſulibus gymnaſium ictu fulminis conflagravit, effigieſque in eo Neronis ad informe æs liquefacta. Et motu terræ celebre Campaniæ oppidum Pompeii magna ex parte proruit." Ann. l. 15. c. 22.

‖ "Pompeios, celebrem Campaniæ urbem ... deſediſſe terræ motu, vexatis quacumque adjacentibus regionibus, Lucili virorum optime, audivimus: et quidem diebus hibernis, quos vacare a tali periculo majores noſtri ſolebant promittere. Nonis Febr. fuit motus hic, Regulo et Virginio Conſulibus, qui Campaniam nunquam ſecuram hujus mali, indemnem tamen, et totiens defunctam motu, magna ſtrage vaſtavit. Nam et Herculenſis oppidi pars ruit, dubieque ſtant etiam quæ relicta ſunt. Et Nucirinorum colonia, ut ſine clade, ita non ſine querela eſt. Neapolis quoque privatim multa, publice nihil amiſit, leviter ingenti malo perſtricta. Villæ vero præruptæ paſſim ſine injuria tremuere. Adjiciunt his ſexcentarum ovium gregem exanimatum, et diviſas ſtatuas, &c." Sen. Nat. Qu. l. 6. c. 1.

** Antiq. l. 18. cap. ix.

†† Vid. Uſſer. A. P. J. 4753. p. 864. Baſnag. ann. 40. n. xiii. Tillem. Ruine des Juifs, art. xxviii.

‡‡ Γίνεται δὲ ἡ περὶ τὸν ἐν τῇ Μεσοποταμίᾳ καὶ μάλιστα τὴν Βαβυλῶνα οἰκοῦντας Ἰουδαίους συμφορὰ δεινὴ, καὶ ἀνέκφευκτος ἅς τισιν ἐλάσσων, φῦλόν τε αὐτῶν πολὺ, καὶ ὅσον οὐχ ἡμισυ μύριον πρότερον. Ib. § 1.

§§ Ib. § 9.

‖‖ Ant. l. 20. cap. i. 1.

"jury.

"jury. Three of the principal men, who were the cauſes of the "ſedition, were apprehended, and put in priſon; one of whom was "afterwards put to death, and the two others baniſhed."

Afterwards, in the year of our Lord 49, whilſt Cumanus was Procurator of Judea, there * happened a tumult at Jeruſalem, at the time of Paſſover. The number of Jews that periſhed in it, was not leſs than twenty thouſand; as it is in his Antiquities: but in the Jewiſh war the number is more than ten thouſand.

Whilſt Cumanus was yet in Judea, there † happened a diſturbance between the Jews and the Samaritans, in which many were killed on both ſides.

Joſephus alſo ſays, that ‡ under Cumanus the troubles of the Jewiſh people began, and that in his time they ſuffered very much.

Theſe diſturbances went on increaſing. At Ceſarea there had long been contentions between the Jewiſh people and the other inhabitants. "And," as § Joſephus ſays, "in one hour's time more "than twenty thouſand Jews were deſtroyed, and all Ceſarea was "at once emptied of its Jewiſh inhabitants. Some fled, whom "Florus caught, and ſent them bound to the galleys. At which "the whole nation was enraged. They therefore divided them-"ſelves into ſeveral parties, and laid waſte the villages of the Syrians, "and their neighbouring cities, Philadelphia, Sebonitis, Geraſa, "Pella, and Scythopolis: and after them Gadara and Hippos. And "falling upon Gaulanitis, ſome cities they demoliſhed there, others "they ſet on fire. Then they went to Kedaſa, belonging to the "Syrians, and to Ptolemais, and Gaba, and Ceſarea. Nor "was Sebaſte, or Aſhkalan, able to withſtand the violence with "which they were attacked. When they had burnt theſe to the "ground, they demoliſhed Anthedon and Gaza. Many alſo of the "villages round about theſe cities were plundered. And an im-"menſe ſlaughter was made of the men found in them."

"The ‖ Syrians deſtroyed not a leſs number of the Jews. So "that the diſorders all over Syria were terrible. For every city was "divided into parties, armed againſt each other. And the ſafety "of the one depended upon the deſtruction of the other. The "days were ſpent in ſlaughter, and the nights in terrors, which were "the worſt of the two. It was common to ſee cities filled with "dead bodies lying unburied, thoſe of old men mixed with infants, "all dead, and ſcattered about promiſcuouſly, and women without "covering for their nakedneſs."

"At ** Scythopolis the contention was carried ſo far, that above "thirteen thouſand Jews were killed."

* Antiq. 20. cap. v. 3. De B. J. l. 2. cap. xii. 1.

† Antiq. l. 20. vi. 1. De B. J. l. 2. xii. 3.

‡ ἐν δ' Συρίᾳ τε ἤρξαντο, ᾗ φθορὰ πάλιν Ἰουδαίων ἐγένετο. De B. J. l. 2. c. xii. 1.

§ Τὴ δὲ αὐτῆς ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ὥρᾳ, ὥσπερ ἐκ δαιμονίου προνοίας, ἀνήρουν οἱ Καισαρεῖς πᾶς παρ' αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαῖος· ὡς ὑπὸ μίαν ὥραν ἀποσφαγῆναι μὲν ὑπὲρ δισμυρίους, κεκωθῆναι δὲ πᾶσαν τῶν Ἰουδαίων Καισάρειαν De B. J. l. 2. cap. xviii. 1.

‖ Ibid. § 2. ** Ibid. § 3.

"After

"After that, * other cities also rose up against the Jews that were "among them. They of Ashkalon slew two thousand, and five "hundred, they of Ptolemais two thousand, and put many others "into prison. The Tyrians acted in the like manner: as did also "Hippos and Gadara, and divers other cities of Syria."

"At † Alexandria fifty thousand lay dead in heaps. Nor would "the remainder have been spared, if they had not petitioned for "mercy."

Not long after that, the ‡ men of Damascus having got the Jewish inhabitants into the place of exercise, ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ, they came upon them unarmed, and slew ten thousand in an hour's time.

These are what our Lord calls "the beginning of sorrows:" when there were "wars and rumours of wars, one people and nation rising "up against another. The end was not yet." Jerusalem was not yet besieged, nor the people in it shut up, for universal destruction. But that period was nigh. See Matt. xxiv. 6. 8. Mark xiii. 7. 8. Luke xxi. 9. 10.

THE OCCASION OF THE JEWISH WAR, FROM JOSEPHUS.

VII. And now I think, it may not be improper for us to take notice of Josephus's accounts of the occasion of the war.

Giving an account of the contentions between the Jews and Greeks, or Syrians, at Cesarea, where the later obtained a decree from Nero, that the government of the city belonged to them, he says: "And § this occasioned the war, which began in the twelfth "year of Nero." Soon after which, the Jews at Cesarea were treated very contemptuously and injuriously, till they were all destroyed, as he there proceeds to relate: and we have already, in part, transcribed from him.

In the last chapter of the Jewish Antiquities, he complains much of Albinus, and still more of Florus, who succeeded him, and exceeded him in avarice and cruelty: insomuch, that the Jews were ready to consider Albinus as a benefactor. "Finally," ‖ says he, "without adding any thing more, it was Florus, who compelled "us to take up arms against the Romans, thinking it better to be "destroyed all at once, than by little and little."

In his own life he says, "I ** have mentioned all these things to "shew, that the Jews war with the Romans was not their own "own choice, but rather that they were compelled by necessity."

In another place he says: "And †† at the temple of Eleazar,

* Ibid. § 5. † Ibid. § 7, 8.

‡ De B. J. l. 2. cap. 20. § 2.

§ Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ καὶ οἱ Καισαρείων Ἕλληνες νικήσαντες παρὰ Νέρωνι τῆς πόλεως ἀρχὴν, τὰ τῆς κρίσεως ἐνόμισαν γράμματα. Καὶ προστιλάμενοι τὴν ἀρχὴν ὁ πόλεμος ἐωδεκάτῳ μὲν ἔτει τῆς Νέρωνος ἡγεμονίας. De B. J. l. 2. c. xiv. 4.

‖ Καὶ τί δεῖ πλείω λέγειν; Τὸν γὰρ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ὁ κατεναγκάσας ἡμᾶς ἄρασθαι, Φλῶρος ἦν, κρείττον ἡγεμονίας ἀθρόως, ἢ κατ' ὀλίγον ἀπολέσθαι. Antiq. l. 20. xi. 1.

** ὅτι δ' περιείρηται ἐγένετο τῷ πολέμῳ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους Ἰουδαίοις, ἀλλὰ τὸ πλὴν ἀνάγκη. Vit. § 6

†† ἀναπείθει, μηδενὸς ἀλλοτύλως δίδοντος ἢ θυσίαν προσδέχεσθαι. Τοῦτο δὲ ἦν τῷ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πολέμῳ καταβολή. Τὴν γὰρ ὑπὲρ τούτων θυσίαν Καίσαρος ἀπέβλεψαν. De B. l. 2. xvii. 2.

"so

" ſon of Ananias the High-prieſt, a young man of a daring tem-
" per, and then governor, perſuaded thoſe who officiated in the di-
" vine ſervice, not to accept of the gift or ſacrifice of a foreigner.
" That was the origin of the war with the Romans. For thus
" they rejected the ſacrifice of Cæſar for them, (That is, as I ap-
" prehend, they refuſed to offer prayers and ſacrifices, as ſubjects
" ought to do, for the Emperor, and for the proſperity of the Ro-
" man empire.) And though many of the high-prieſts, and of the
" principal men of the nation, earneſtly entreated them, not to
" omit the cuſtomary reſpect for their governors, they could not
" prevail."

Afterwards, near the concluſion of his Hiſtory of the Jewiſh War, when the city was actually taken, he ſays: " But * that " which principally encouraged them to the war, was an ambigu-
" ous oracle, found alſo in their ſacred writings, that about this
" time ſome one from their country ſhould obtain the empire of
" the world. This they underſtood to belong to themſelves. And
" many of the wiſe men were miſtaken in their judgement about
" it. For the oracle intended the government of Veſpaſian, who
" was proclaimed Emperor in Judea."

That is a very remarkable paſſage. Some farther notice ſhall be taken of it by and by.

That the Jewiſh people were uneaſy under ſubjection to the Romans, even in our Saviour's time, long before the war broke out, appears from many things recorded in the Goſpels: as their great averſion to the Publicans, though Jews, who were employed in collecting the Roman tribute: from the queſtion brought to our Saviour, " whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæſar or not." Matt. xxii. 15. 22. Mark xiii. 13. 17. Luke xx. 19. 26. from the attempt of ſome, who followed our Lord for a time, to make him a King. John vi. 15. from their frequent and importunate demands, that he would " ſhew them a ſign from Heaven," meaning ſome token, that he intended to work out for them a temporal deliverance, " that they might believe in him, and have full aſ-
" ſurance of his being the Chriſt." Matt. xii. 38. xvi. 1. 4. and elſewhere: and from divers other things, which muſt be obvious to all who have read the Goſpels with attention.

This uneaſineſs under the Roman yoke continued and increaſed. Obſervable here is the anſwer which was made by Titus, after the temple was burnt, to the petition of Simon and John, the two great leaders of the factions in Jeruſalem. " You † have never ceaſed
" rebelling, ſince Pompey firſt made a conqueſt of your country.
" And at length you have declared open war againſt the Romans.
" —Our kindneſs to you has encouraged your enmity againſt us:
" who have let you live in your country in peace and quietneſs.
" In the firſt place we gave you your own country to live in, and
" ſet over you kings of your own nation, and farther we preſerved

* De B. J. l. 6. cap. v. 4. † De B. J. l. 6. cap. vi. 2.

" to

"to you your own laws: and withal we have permitted you to "live either by yourſelves, or among others, as you liked beſt. "And, which is the greateſt favour of all, we have given you leave "to gather up that tribute which you pay to God, together with "all ſuch other gifts as are dedicated to him. Nor have we called "thoſe to account who carried ſuch donations, nor given them "any obſtruction; till at length you became richer than ourſelves, "even when you were our enemies, and you have made prepara- "tions for the war againſt us with our own money."

There are other things likewiſe in Joſephus, which deſerve to be taken notice of in this place. Giving an account of the aſſeſſment made in Judea after the removal of Archelaus, he ſays: "At "the perſuaſion of Joazar the high-prieſt, the Jews did generally "acquieſce. However, Judas the Gaulanite, of the town called "Gamala, aſſociating to himſelf Sadduc a Phariſee, excited the "people to rebellion, telling them, that an aſſeſſment would bring "in downright ſlavery, and exhorting the whole nation to aſſert "their liberty. The whole nation heard their diſcourſes with in- "credible pleaſure. And it is impoſſible to repreſent the evils the "nation has ſuffered, which were owing to theſe men; for Judas "and Sadduc brought in among us this fourth ſect. And there be- "ing many who embraced their ſentiments, they not only cauſed "diſturbances in the government at that time, but laid the founda- "tion of thoſe evils that followed; which indeed are owing to this "principle, till then unknown among us *."

He then delivers the character and principles of the three chief and more ancient ſects of the Jews, as he calls them. And after that returns again to the men, of whom he had been ſpeaking be- fore. "Judas † the Galilean was the leader of the fourth ſect. "In all other points they hold the ſame ſentiments with the Pha- "riſees, but they have an invincible affection for liberty, and ac- "knowledge God alone their Lord and Governor. From that time "the nation became infected with this principle. And Florus, by "abuſing his power when he was governor, threw them into de- "ſpair, and provoked them to rebel againſt the Romans."

Thoſe two paſſages were cited by me ‡ formerly. And divers obſervations were made upon them, which ſtill appear to me not im- pertinent; but I am unwilling to repeat them here. And I think, that, in the connection in which they are now cited by me, it muſt be apparent from them, without farther remarks, that the nation in general was infected with the doctrine of Judas of Galilee. They had an invincible zeal for liberty, ſcorned ſubjection to the Romans their maſters, and took up arms againſt them. As Cappellus ſays, "Florus § by his exactions forced them againſt their conſent, or

* Antiq. l 18. cap. i. § 1. † Ibid. § 6.

‡ Credibility, part i. B. i. ch. 9. p. 486, &c.

§ "Florus, peſſimus homo, qui modis omnibus Judæos cum vexaret et opprimeret, cogit "vel invitos, aut potius ultro ruentes impulit, adverſus Romanos rebellare." L. Cappel. Hiſt. Jud. p. 121.

"rather

" rather drove them who were already disposed to it, and wanted no " incitement to rebel against the Romans."

I would now take farther notice of the passage above cited, wherein our Jewish historian says, " what principally encouraged them to the " war was an ambiguous oracle, found in their sacred writings, " that about that time some one from their country should obtain " the empire of the world."

False Prophets and false Christians in Judea, as our Lord had foretold.

The truth and importance of that observation, as I apprehend, may be confirmed and illustrated by the accounts which Josephus has given of numerous impostors, or false-prophets, which arose among them about this time, agreeably to our Lord's predictions, as I shall now shew.

" Whilst * Fadus was Procurator of Judea, a certain impostor, " called † Theudas, persuaded a very great multitude, taking their " effects with them, to follow him to the river Jordan: assuring " them, that he was a Prophet, and that causing the river to divide " at his command, he would give them an easy passage over: by " such speeches he deceived many. But Fadus was far from suffer- " ing them to go on in their madness. For he sent out a troop of " horse, who, coming upon them unexpectedly, slew many, and " took many prisoners. Theudas himself was among the last " mentioned. They cut off his head, and brought it to Jerusalem. " These things happened in Judea, whilst Cuspius Fadus was Pro- " curator."

Fadus was sent into Judea by the Emperor Claudius, after the death of Herod Agrippa. This affair of Theudas therefore must be rightly placed in the year of Christ 45, or 46.

That is transcribed from the 20th and last book of the Antiquities. In the same book, afterwards, in another chapter, in the history of transactions in the time of Nero, Josephus says: " But ‡ affairs in " Judea went on continually growing worse and worse. The country " was again filled with robbers and impostors, who deceived the peo- " ple. But Felix time after time apprehended, and put to death many " of them." A little lower: " And § indeed, by means of the crimes " committed by the robbers, the city was filled with all sorts of im- " piety. And impostors and deceivers persuaded the people to follow " them into the wilderness: where, as they said, they should see ma- " nifest wonders and signs performed by the providence of God. " And many hearkening unto them at length suffered the punishment " of their folly. For Felix fetched them back, and punished them. " About the same time there came a man out of Egypt to Jerusalem,

* Ant. l. 20. cap. v. 1.

† That Theudas is different from him, mentioned by Gamaliel, Acts v. 36. as was shewn formerly. Credib. p. i. B. 2. ch. vii. p. 921, &c.

‡ Antiq. l. 20. cap. viii. 5.

§ Ib. § 6.

" who

" who ſaid, he was a Prophet: and having perſuaded a good number " of the meaner ſort of people to follow him to the mount of Olives, " he told them, that thence they ſhould ſee the walls of Jeruſalem " fall down at his command, and promiſed through them to give " them entrance into the city. But Felix, being informed of theſe " things, ordered his ſoldiers to their arms. And marching out of " Jeruſalem with a large body of horſe and foot, he fell upon the " Egyptian, and killed four hundred of them, and took two hun- " dred priſoners. But the Egyptian getting out of the fight eſcaped."

This ſame ſtory is alſo in the War, with ſome differences in the numbers, which were conſidered * formerly.

There the account concludes in this manner. " When † they " came to engage, the Egyptian fled, followed by a few only. A " large part of thoſe who were with him were either ſlain, or taken " priſoners. The reſt of the multitude being ſcattered, ſhifted for " themſelves as they could."

This is ſuppoſed to have happened in the year of Chriſt 55.

In the War, in the paragraph preceding his account of the Egyptian impoſtor, having juſt before related, how Judea then abounded with robbers, called Sicarii, he ſays: " Beſide ‡ them, there was " another body of wicked men, whoſe hands indeed were cleaner, " but their intentions were as impious, who diſturbed the happy " ſtate of the city no leſs than thoſe murderers. For deceivers and " impoſtors, under a pretence of divine inſpiration, aiming at changes " and innovations, made the people mad, and induced them to " follow them into the wilderneſs, pretending, that God would " there give them ſigns and wonders. Felix, judging theſe proceed- " ings to be no leſs than the beginning of a revolt, ſent out his ſol- " diers, both horſe and foot, and deſtroyed great numbers of them."

In the forecited chapter of the 20th book of the Antiquities, ſpeaking of the robbers in the time of Porcius Feſtus, about the year of Chriſt 60, he ſays, " that § he alſo ſent out both horſe and foot " to fall upon thoſe who had been ſeduced by a certain impoſtor, " who had promiſed them deliverance, and freedom from the mi- " ſeries under which they laboured, if they would but follow him " into the wilderneſs. The forces deſtroyed both him that had de- " ceived them, and thoſe that followed him."

Joſephus ſpeaks of ſix thouſand, who periſhed in the outer courts of the temple, after it had been ſet on fire. " The || ſoldiers, " ſays he, ſet fire to the portico. Whereupon ſome threw them- " ſelves headlong down the precipice, others periſhed in the flames. " And not one out of ſo great a number eſcaped. A falſe Prophet " was the occaſion of the ruin of thoſe people, who on that very " day had made proclamation in the city, aſſuring them, that God " commanded them to go up to the temple, where they would re- " ceive ſigns of deliverance. And indeed there were then many

* Credib. Part i. B. 2. ch. viii. † De B. J. l. 2. c. xiii. 5. ‡ Ibid. § 4.
§ Ant. l. 20. cap. viii. § 10. || De B. J. l. 6. cap. v. § 2.

" prophets,

" prophets, ſuborned by the tyrants, to impoſe upon the people, and " telling them, that they ought to wait for help from God."

And, preſently after, proceeding to relate the omens and prodigies foreſignifying the calamities coming upon the Jewiſh people, and the city of Jeruſalem, which ſhall be recited by and by, he ſays: " Impoſtors *, who ſpake lies in the name of God, deceived " this miſerable people. They neither attended to, nor believed " the manifeſt ſigns, foreſignifying the coming deſolation. But, like " infatuated men, who have neither eyes to ſee, nor minds to per- " ceive, they neglected the divine denunciations."

So truly did our Lord ſay: " I am come in my Father's name, " and ye receive me not. If another ſhall come in his own name, " him ye will receive." John v, 43.

Our bleſſed Lord ſays, Matt. xxiv. 24. " For there will ariſe falſe " Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and will ſhew great ſigns and wonders, " inſomuch that (if it were poſſible) they will deceive the very " elect." But our Lord does not intend to ſay, that any of thoſe falſe prophets would exhibit or perform great wonders. The orignal word is " δώσουσι, they will give:" the ſame word that is in the Septuagint verſion of Deut. xiii. 1. " If there ariſe among you a prophet, or a " dreamer of dreams, and he giveth thee a ſign, or a wonder. καὶ δώ σοι σημεῖον ἢ τέρας, that is, ſhall propoſe, or promiſe ſome ſign or wonder, as the ſequel ſhews. Parallel with the text juſt cited from St. Matthew is Mark xiii. 22. " For falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets " will ariſe, and will ſhew ſigns and wonders," the ſame word " again, καὶ δώσουσι σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, in order to ſeduce, if it were " poſſible, even the elect.

The accounts, which Joſephus has given of the impoſtors in his time, ſhew the exact accompliſhment of theſe predictions of our Lord. " They perſuaded the people to follow them into the wilder- " neſs, where, as they ſaid, they would ſee manifeſt ſigns and wonders " performed by the power of God:" or, aſſuring them, " that God " would there give them ſigns and wonders:" or, that " they " ſhould there receive ſigns of deliverance, and the like."

The paſſages of Joſephus bear witneſs to the fulfilment of our Lord's prediction, " that many falſe prophets would ariſe, and de- " ceive many." Matt. xxiv. 11.

Our Lord does alſo ſay there, at ver. 5. " And many will come " in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, and will deceive many." And it is eaſy to believe, that † ſome of the many falſe-prophets did expreſsly take to themſelves that title, though Joſephus does not ſay it. But whether they did, or not, our Saviour's predictions are verified in the appearance of thoſe falſe-prophets. " Joſephus, ſays ‡ " Abp. Tillotſon, mentions ſeveral of theſe: of whom, though he " does not expreſsly ſay, that they called themſelves the Meſſias;

* Ibid. § 3.
† See Tillemont, " Ruine des Juifs, art. 36. A. D. 52.
‡ Vol. III. p. 552.

" yet he says that which is equivalent, that they undertook to rescue " the people from the Roman yoke. Which was the thing which " the Jews expected the Messias would do for them. And therefore " we find, that the disciples who were going to Emmaus, and knew " not that Christ was risen, and were doubtful what to think of him, " say: 'We hoped, this had been he that should have redeemed " Israel:' that is, they hoped, this had been the Messias, that being, " it seems, a common periphrasis of the Messias, that he was 'he that " was to deliver Israel." Which is agreeable to a note of * Grotius upon the place. All they, therefore, who pretended that they were inspired, and sent by God to deliver the Jewish people, were indeed *false-christs*. They took upon themselves the character of the Messiah.

We may now readily admit the truth of what Josephus says in the passage transcribed not long ago: " That what principally ex- " cited the Jewish people, the wise men, as he calls them, as well " as others, to the war with the Romans, was the expectation of a " great deliverer to arise among them, who should obtain the em- " pire of the world." This great deliverer was the Messiah. The numerous *false-prophets* and *false-christs*, of whom Josephus speaks so frequently, and so distinctly, are full proofs of it.

The expectation of the coming of the Messiah, about the time of the appearance of Jesus, was universal, and had been so for some while †. But with the idea of a prophet, or extraordinary teacher of religion, they had joined also that of a worldly king and conqueror, who should deliver the Jewish people from the burdens under which they laboured, raise them to a state of independence, and bring the nations of the earth into subjection to them, to be ruled and tyrannised over by them. And because our Lord did not perform, nor attempt this, they rejected and crucified him. If he would but have assumed the state and character of an earthly prince, Scribes and Pharisees, Priests and People, would all have joined themselves to him, and have put themselves under his banner. Of this we see many proofs in the Gospels. This disposition prevailed to the last. The people, therefore, though they had already met with many disappointments, when our Lord entered into Jerusalem, in no greater state than riding upon an ass, accompanied him with loud acclamations, and other tokens of respect, saying: " Hosanna to the " Son of David. Blessed is the King, that cometh in the name of the " Lord." And Jesus, our Lord, not assuming then the character of an earthly prince, was a fresh disappointment, and left deep resentments. Which rendered them susceptible of the worst impressions from the chief priests, and their other rulers. And at their instigation they desired Pilate, the Roman governor, to set Barabbas at liberty,

* " Christi nomine populus Judaicus intelligebat vindicem libertatis. Nam illud, ἡμεῖς δὲ " ἠλπίζομεν, ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ, descriptio est nominis Christi. Quare " quicumque se missos divinitus liberatores populi Judaici dicebant, eo ipso Christos se pro- " fitebantur, et erant ψευδόχριστοι, &c." Grot. in Matt. xxiv. 5.

† Proofs of this, together with divers remarks, may be seen in Credib. Part i. B. i. ch. v. p. 280, &c.

and crucify Jesus. With which clamorous, and importunate demand, he at length complied, still bearing testimony to the innocence of him whom he unwillingly condemned. The account of St. Matthew alone, without any other, will suffice for shewing this amazing transaction. "Pilate saith unto them: What shall I do then with "Jesus, who is called Christ? They all say unto him: Let him be "crucified. The Governor said: Why! what evil has he done? "But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. When "Pilate saw, that he prevailed nothing, and that rather a tumult "was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multi-"tude, saying: I am innocent from the blood of this just person. "See ye to it. Then answered all the people: His blood be upon "us, and upon our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them. "And when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified." Matt. xxvi. 22. 26.

The continued expectation of the Messiah, as a worldly King and Conqueror, as we have just seen in Josephus, and their uneasiness under the Roman yoke, were the immediate occasions of their rebelling against the authority to which they were then subject. And the same principles, that induced them to reject and crucify Jesus, brought upon them their utter and final ruin.

As the sin of the Jewish People in rejecting and crucifying Jesus, after a life of perfect innocence and consummate virtue, after speaking as no man had done before, and doing works which no other man had done, at Jerusalem, and in every part of the land of Israel, after such preparations as had been made for his reception by the Prophets, and by the testimony of John the Baptist, his forerunner, was * very great and aggravated: and as they rejected the renewed offers of mercy, and repeated and earnest calls to repentance, made by Christ's Apostles, and went on increasing in wickedness: God at length suffered the Romans to come upon them with an armed force, demolished their temple, and made desolate their city, and their whole country, with many circumstances of uncommon and even unparalleled distress. All which having been foreseen, and often foretold, by the Lord Jesus, in his public discourses; the accomplishment of these predictions, in the event, is an argument of great force in favour of his divine mission, and of his being indeed the Messiah, additional to the excellent doctrine, and wonderful works of his ministry.

VIII. The history of the Jewish war, and of the siege of Jerusalem, from Josephus.

Having shewn the occasion and causes of the war, and having also observed the several things foretold by the Lord Jesus, as

* If ye were blind, ye should have no sin. But now you say, we see: therefore your sin remaineth. John ix. 41. If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works, which no other man did, they had not had sin. But now have they both seen, and hated, both me and my Father. John xv. 22—24.

preceding

preceding it; I now proceed to the hiſtory of the war itſelf, collecting it from Joſephus, and making my extracts in his own words.

The diſturbances ſtill increaſing at Jeruſalem, and the animoſity againſt Florus being very great, "Ceſtius Gallus *, preſident of Syria, judged it not proper for him to lie ſtill any longer. He therefore determined to march into Judea. Whereupon he took out of Antioch the twelfth legion entire, and out of the reſt two thouſand choſen men, with ſix cohorts of foot, and four troops of horſe, beſide the auxiliaries, which were ſent by the Kings. Of which Antiochus ſent two thouſand horſe, and three thouſand foot, all archers. Agrippa ſent a thouſand horſe, and two thouſand foot. Sohemus followed with four thouſand. He then marched to Ptolemais. Agrippa accompanied Ceſtus, as a guide in the journey, and as capable of being uſeful to him in other reſpects. After he was come thither, Ceſtus took a party of his army, and marched haſtily to Zabulon, a ſtrong city of Galilee, which ſeparates the country of Ptolemais from our nation. That he found deſtitute of its men, the multitude having fled to the mountains, but full of all good things, which he allowed the ſoldiers to ſeize as plunder. And he ſet fire to the city, though it's buildings were very beautiful, reſembling thoſe of Tyre, and Sidon, and Berytus. After that, he over-ran the neighbouring country, ſeizing whatever came in his way, and ſetting fire to the villages. And then returned to Ptolemais." At this very time, as Joſephus adds in the ſame paragraph, the Jews found means to deſtroy about two thouſand Syrians at Berytus, and near it, Ceſtius being at a diſtance.

"Now † Ceſtius himſelf marched from Ptolemais, and came to Caſarea. And then ſent part of his army before him to Joppa. Who coming ſuddenly upon that people, who were prepared neither for flight nor for their own defence, ſlew them all with their families, and then plundered and burnt the city. The number of the ſlain were eight thouſand and four hundred. In like manner he ſent a number of horſe into the toparchy of Narbata, not far from Ceſarea, who ſlew many of the inhabitants, plundered their goods, and ſet fire to the villages."

"Now ‡ alſo Ceſtius ſent Gallus, commander of the twelfth legion, into Galilee, where he ſlew more than two thouſand."

"Gallus § then returned to Ceſarea, and Ceſtius moved with his whole army, and came to Antipatris. Thence he ſet forward to Lydda, where he found the place empty of men, the people being gone up to Jeruſalem upon account of the feaſt of Tabernacles. However, he found there fifty men, whom he ſlew, and burnt the city. And then marched onward. And going up by Bethoron, he pitched his camp at Gaba, fifty furlongs from Jeruſalem."

* De B. J. l. 2. cap. xviii. § 9.
† § 10. ‡ Ib. § 11. § Ib. cap. xix. § 1.

" The * Jews seeing the war approaching to their motropolis, " relying upon their numbers, went out to fight in a hasty and dis- " orderly manner, even in the time of the festival. But the rage, " which made them forget their religion, did also make them su- " perior to their enemies. Cestius with his whole army was in " danger. Five hundred and fifteen of the Romans were slain, " whilst the Jews lost only two and twenty. The most valiant of " the Jews were Monobazus, and Kenedæus, related to Monobazus, " King of the Adiabenes. Next to them were Niger of Peréa, " and Silas of Babylon, who had deserted from king Agrippa to the " Jews, and Simon son of Gioras, to be hereafter often mentioned. " After that, the Jews retired into the city. Cestius stayed there " three days."

" At † this time Agrippa with the consent of Cestius sent to the " Jews two ambassadors, Borcæus and Phœbus, men well known " to them, with assurances of plenary forgiveness from Cestius, if " they would lay down their arms, and submit. But the Jews would " not so much as receive the ambassadors. Phœbus they fell upon, " and slew him, before he had spoken a word. Borcæus too was " wounded. But he retreated, and escaped."

" Soon ‡ after that, Cestius moved forward with his whole army, " and encamped upon an elevated spot of ground called Scopos " [signifying the Prospect, or Watch-tower.] Here he rested three " days. On the fourth day, which was the thirtieth of October, he " brought his army into the city. The seditious, as Josephus calls " them, were much terrified, and retired from the suburbs to the " inner part of the city, and the temple. Cestius soon set fire to the " place called Bezetha, or the new city, and to the wood-market. " After which he came forward to the upper part of the city, and " pitched his camp over against the royal palace. And if at that " time he had attempted to make his way within the walls by force, " he would have won the city presently, and put an end to the war " at once. But Tyrannus Priscus, a general in the army, and ma- " ny officers of the horse, who had been corrupted by Florus, di- " verted him from that design. Which was the occasion that this " war lasted so long, and the Jews were involved in such grievous " calamities."

So writes Josephus. And afterwards he says: " If § Cestius had " continued the siege a little longer, he had certainly taken the city. " But God, as I think, for the wickedness of the people abhorring " his own solemnities, suffered not the war to come to an end at that " time."

" Cestius ‖ then withdrew from the city. The Jews resumed " courage, and went after him. and coming upon his rear, de- " stroyed a good number both of horse and foot. That night Cestius " lay at his former camp, Scopos. As he went farther off the " next day, he even invited his enemies to pursue him. The Ro-

* Ib. § 2. † Ib. § 3. ‡ Ib. § 4. § § 6. ‖ § 7.

" mans

"mans suffered greatly. Among the slain were Priscus, commander "of the sixth legion, Longinus a tribune, and Æmilius Secundus, "commander of a troop of horse. It was not without a great deal "of difficulty that they got to Gabao, their former camp, and leav- "ing behind their baggage. There Cestius stayed two days, and was "in great perplexity how to proceed. On the third day he judged "it expedient to move."

"That * he might march on with the greater expedition, he "threw away every thing that might retard his march. He killed "the mules, and the other beasts, excepting only such as carried "weapons of war: which the Romans kept for their own use, and "that they might not fall into the hands of the Jews, to be after- "wards employed against them. In that march they met with such "difficulties, that the Jews were near taking the whole army of "Cestius prisoners; and would have affected it, if night had not "come on."

"In † their flight they left behind them many engines for sieges, "and for throwing stones, and a great part of their other instru- "ments of war. The Jews pursued them as far as Antipatris, and "then returned, taking up the engines, spoiling the dead bodies, "and gathering up the prey, which the Romans had left behind "them. So they came back to their metropolis with great rejoi- "cings. They lost but a few men themselves. But they had slain "of the Romans and their auxiliaries five thousand and three hun- "dred foot, and three hundred and eighty horse. These things hap- "pened on the eighth day of November, in the twelfth year of the "reign of Nero."

"After ‡ that calamity had befallen Cestius," says Josephus, "ma- "ny of the most considerable of the Jewish people forsook the city, "as men do a sinking ship."

And it is very likely, that at this time many of the Christians also withdrew from Jerusalem and Judea. Eusebius says, that § be- fore the war began, the Christians left Jerusalem, and went to a place beyond Jordan, called Pella. Epiphanius ‖ speaks to the like purpose. Eusebius does not quote any antient author for what he says. But it might be founded upon tradition, and such as could be relied upon. As he resided near the place, he might have satisfac- tory information of it, and receive the account from the descendants of those Jewish believers.

However, some of them may have gone abroad into the other countries. St. John, as is well known, lived for some time in A- sia. When he came thither, we cannot say exactly: but probably, in the year of Christ 66, or sooner. Some of the Jewish believers

* § 8. † Ib. § 9.

‡ Μετὰ δὲ τὴν Κεστίου συμφορὰν, πολλοὶ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὥσπερ βαπτιζομένης ἤδη τῆς πόλεως. De B. J. l. 2. c. xx. § 1.

§ . . . . πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου, μεθιστᾶσθαι τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τίνα τῆς Περαίας πόλιν οἰκεῖν. . . . Πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῶν ἐνῴκησαν. H. E. l. 3. cap. v. p. 75. A.

‖ H. 29. § vii.

might go with him out of Judea, or come to him into Aſia afterwards. St. John in his third epiſtle, ver. 6. ſpeaks of ſtrangers, who were under difficulties. Some learned men * have ſuppoſed, that thereby are meant Jewiſh believers, who had been driven out of Paleſtine, or had fled from it, induced thereto by the neceſſity of the times, and their fidelity to Chriſt, and had left their ſubſtance behind them.

I think, we may reckon it to be certain, or at leaſt highly probable, that none of the faithful diſciples of Jeſus were ſhut up in Jeruſalem at the ſiege: and that moſt of them left it ſome while before it began, in the year of Chriſt 66, or thereabout, or ſooner.

Our bleſſed Lord, ſpeaking of the difficulties of theſe times, and of the declenſions of ſome of his followers, encourages faithfulneſs in ſtrong terms. Mark xiii. 13. . . "And ye ſhall be hated of all "men for my name ſake. But he that ſhall endure unto the end, "ſhall be ſaved." And Luke xxi. 17—19. "And ye ſhall be "hated of all men for my name ſake. But there ſhall not an hair "of your head periſh. In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls." And compare Matt. x 21, 22. Theſe gracious aſſurances were now fulfilled. The difficulties, which the followers of Jeſus met with, were very great. And the "love of many waxed cold," and ſome apoſtatized to Judaiſm, to avoid ſufferings. Nevertheleſs, they gained nothing by it. They joined themſelves to the unbelieving part of the nation, and had part with them in the heavy calamities which befell them. But the faithful followers of Jeſus, who were ſteady to their profeſſion, and attended to his predictions concerning coming calamities, and obſerved the ſigns of their near approach, eſcaped, and obtained ſafety, with only the leſſer difficulties of a flight, which was neceſſary in the time of a general calamity.

The † Jews who had defeated Ceſtius, upon their return to Jeruſalem, appointed governors and commanders for ſeveral places. "Joſeph ſon of Gorian," and Ananus the High-Prieſt, were choſen to govern the city, and to repair the walls. Joſephus ſon of Matthias, our hiſtorian, was made governor of both the Galilees. Others were ſent to other places.

Ceſtius ‡ ſent meſſengers to Nero in Achaia, to give him an account of what had happened, and of the ſtate of affairs in Judea, and to lay the blame of all the diſturbances upon Florus.

Nero, as Joſephus ſays §, was not a little moved at theſe things, though he diſſembled his concern. However, he choſe for a general a man of known valour, and experience in war, ſeveral of whoſe important ſervices are here mentioned by Joſephus, agreeably to the teſtimony of the ‖ Roman authors; who repreſent Veſpaſian to have been

* See the Supplement to Credib vol. III. p. 311.

† Ib. cap. xx. § 3, 4. ‡ Ib. cap. xx § 1. § De B. J. l. 3. cap. i. § 1. 2.

‖ "Miſſu Neronis, Veſpaſianus fortuna, famaque, et egregiis miniſtris, &c" Tacit. Hiſt. L. v. cap. 10.

"Claudio

been chosen for this service out of regard to his merit, when upon some accounts he was disagreeable to Nero.

Vespasian * sent his own son Titus from Achaia, where he then was, to Alexandria, to fetch thence the fifth and tenth legions. Himself, having crossed the Hellespont, went by land into Syria, where he gathered together the Roman forces, and a good number of auxiliaries from the neighbouring princes.

The † Jews, elevated by the advantages which they had gained over Cestius, determined to carry the war to a greater distance. Accordingly they marched to Ashkalon, a city always at enmity with them, distant from Jerusalem 550 furlongs [more than 60 miles]. Here the Jewish people were defeated in two attacks, losing more than eighteen thousand men, and two of their generals, John the Essen, and Silas the Babylonian. Niger the Peraite, the third general, narrowly escaped with his life.

Vespasian ‡, when he arrived at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, reckoned the third city of the Roman empire for magnitude and dignity, found there Agrippa waiting for him. And taking the whole army with him, he soon marched forward to Ptolemais.

Titus §, making greater expedition than could be expected, especially in the winter season, came to his father at Ptolemais, bringing with him the fifth and tenth legions. To which were added the fifteenth legion, and eighteen cohorts. There were also five cohorts from Cesarea, with one troop of horse, and also five other troops from Syria. There was also a considerable number of auxiliaries from the kings Antiochus [of Comagene] and Agrippa, and Seleucus, and Malchus the Arabian. So that the whole army of Romans and auxiliaries, horse and foot, amounted to about sixty thousand men, besides servants, whom Josephus represents as far from being useless, according to the Roman discipline.

Thus we have pursued the history to the end of the year 66, and into the begining of the year 67.

Vespasian ‖ stayed some while at Ptolemais. However Placidus, who was before sent into Gallilee, destroyed many, whom he met

" Claudio principe, Narcissi gratia legatus legionis in Germania missus est. Inde in Bri-
" tanniam translatus, tricies cum hoste conflixit. . . . Peregrinatione Achaica inter comites
" Neronis, cum cantante eo discederet sæpius, aut præsens obdormiscret, gravissimam con-
" traxit offensam. Prohibitusque non contubernio modo, sed etiam publica salutatione,
" secessit in parvam ac deviam civitatem, quod latenti, etiamque extrema metuenti, provincia
" cum exercitu oblata est. Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut
" eo tempore Judææ profecti rerum potirentur. Id de Imperatore Romano, quantum eventu
" postea prædictum patuit. Judæi ad se trahentes rebellarunt: cæsique Præpositio, Le-
" gatum insuper Syriæ consularem supperias ferentem, raptâ Aquilâ fugaverunt. Ad hunc
" motum comprimendum cum exercitu amplore, et non infrenuo duce, cui tamen tuto
" tanta res committeretur, opus esset, ipse potissimum delectus est: et ut industriæ expertæ,
" nec metuendus ullo modo ob humilitatem generis ac nominis. Additis igitur ad copias
" duabus legionibus, octo alis, cohortibus decem, atque inter Legatos majore filio assumto,
" ut primum provinciam attigit, proximas quoque convertit in se. Correcta statim cas-
" trorum disciplina: uno quoque et altero prælio tam constanter inito, ut in expugnatione
" castelli lapidis ictum genu scuto sagittas aliquot exceperit." Sueton. Vespasian. cap. iv.

* De B. J. l. 3. cap. i. § 3. † Ib. cap. ii. § 1, 2, 3.
‡ Ibid. § 4. § Ib. cap. iv. n. 2. ‖ L. 3. cap. vi. 1.

with in the open countries. He alſo made an attack upon Jotapata, but was repulſed.

Veſpaſian * leaves Ptolemais, and marcheth with his army in great order into Galilee.

The † firſt place taken by Veſpaſian was Gorada, which at that time had in it few men of the military age. But he ſlew all the young people; the Romans, from hatred of the Jews, and reſenting the defeat of Ceſtius, having no mercy on any age. He alſo ſet fire to the city, and burnt all the villages, and ſmaller towns, round about; making ſome totally deſolate, in others taking ſome captives.

Joſephus ‡ leaves Tiberias, and enters Jotapata on the 21ſt day of May.

The § next day Veſpaſian marches to Jotapata, at ‖ the ſiege of which he received a ſlight wound in one of his feet.

"Whilſt ** Veſpaſian lay with his army before Jotapata, he ſent "Trajan, commander of the tenth legion, to Japha, not far off. "The place was ſtrong, and ſurrounded by a double wall. A large "number made a ſalley upon the Romans. Being beaten back, they "retired within the outer wall. But when they came to the inner "wall, their fellow-citizens refuſed to admit them, leſt the Ro- "mans ſhould alſo force their way in with them. And †† now, ſays "Joſephus, it might be ſeen, that God had given up the Galileans "to the Romans, to be deſtroyed by their cruel enemies. The "number of the ſlain in the diſtreſs between the two walls was "twelve thouſand. Of this Trajan gave information to Veſpaſian, "deſiring him to ſend his ſon Titus thither, that he might have "the honour of compleating the conqueſt."

"Veſpaſian, ſuſpecting there might ſtill be ſome difficulty, ſent "Titus with five hundred horſe, and a thouſand foot. When the "place was taken, all the people, young and old, were deſtroyed. "None were ſaved, excepting the male infants, and the women, "who where made ſlaves. The number of thoſe who were ſlain, "now, and in the former attack, were fifteen thouſand, the priſo- "ners were two thouſand a hundred and thirty. This calamity be- "fell the Galileans on the five and twentieth day of May."

At ‡‡ the ſame time the Samaritans got together in a riotous manner at mount Garizim. Whereupon Veſpaſian ſent againſt them Cerealis, commander of the fifth legion, with ſix hundred horſe, and three thouſand foot; who ſlew them all, to the number of eleven thouſand and ſix hundred. This happened on the 25th day of the month of June.

Now §§ the final attack was made upon Jotapata, which was taken after a ſiege of forty-ſeven days. All of every age were ſlain, except infants and women. The captives were a thouſand and two hundred. The number of ſlain in the laſt attack, and in the former en-

* Ib. n. 2, 3. † Cap. vii. 1. ‡ § Ib. 3.
§ Ib. 4. ‖ Ib. § 22. ** Ib. § 31.
†† Ὁρᾷς ἄρα, ὁ Ῥωμαίοις τὰ Γαλιλαίων πάλη γινόμενος. κ. τ. λ. Ibid.
‡‡ Ibid. p. 32. §§ Ib. § 33—35.

counters,

counters was forty thousand. Vespasian ordered the city to be demolished, and set fire to all the castles. Thus Jotapata was taken on the first day of July, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Nero.

I think it may be worth the while to observe here, for shewing the violent and desperate disposition of the Jewish people at this time, "that * in the distress of the last attack, when the Romans were got "within the walls of Jotapata, many of the people made away with "themselves, rather than come into the hands of the Romans. Jo- "sephus calls them chosen men, who were near his person. They "could not kill the Romans. And they resolved not to be killed by "them."

Undoubtedly, my readers recollect here what was taken notice of formerly †, which happened presently afterwards, in the cave, where Josephus and forty other persons of distinction had hid themselves ‡. And several other like instances may appear hereafter, as we proceed in this history, which ought not to pass unnoticed.

Josephus § now came into the hands of the Roman general. He was still a prisoner, and carried a chain. But he had change of apparel given him, and was otherwise well used.

The ‖ siege of Jotapata being over, on the fourth of July Vespasian returned to Ptolemais. Thence he went to Cesarea by the seaside. Here he put two legions, for some while, for their refreshment; but sent the tenth and fifth to Scythopolis, that Cesarea might not be overburdened.

"In ** the mean time he sent some of his soldiers, both horse and "foot, to Joppa. Which, though it had been demolished not long "since by Cestius, was re-peopled by men who had escaped from "other cities. Here they built many ships, and exercised a kind "of piracy. Upon the approach of the Romans they betook them- "selves to their ships, which met with a violent storm, and were "cast away. The number that perished was computed to be four "thousand and two hundred. Here †† also some, rather than be "drowned, or be cast on the shore, and then be killed by the Ro- "mans, put an end to their own lives. The place was now entirely "demolished. However, by Vespasian's direction, a number of horse "and foot were left here, with orders to destroy the neighbouring "villages. So those troops over-ran the country, as they were or- "dered, and laid waste the whole region."

In ‡‡ a short time Vespasian went from Cesarea before mentioned to Cesarea Philippi, to pay a compliment to king Agrippa, by whom he had been invited, and by whom he was now entertained twenty days.

* Τοῦτο πολλὴν μὲν περὶ τὴν Ἰώσηπον ἐπιλησίαν, ἐπ' αὐτοχειρίαν παράξει. Καὶ δὴ γὰρ, ὡς εἶδ' ὡ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀνελεῖν εὐπετὲς, τόγε μὴ πεσεῖν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων πρόλαβον, ὁ συναθροισθέντες ἐπὶ τὰ καθηγούμενα τῆς πόλεως σφῶν, αὐτὸς ἀπέθανον. § 34.

† See p. 33.

‡ . . . ἔνθα τεσσαράκοντα μὲν τῶν ἐπισήμων ἀνδρῶν κατελαμβάνετο λανθάνοντας. Ib cap. viii. 1.

§ Ib. § 9. ‖ Ibid. cap. 9. § 1. ** § 2, 3, 4.

†† Τινὲς δὲ ὡς κυβερνήτην τὴν θάλασσαν ἐξέλαυνον, τῷ σιδήρῳ σφᾶς αὐτὸς ἀναιροῦντες. Ib. § 3.

‡‡ Ibid. p. 33.

Hearing

Hearing * of the revolt of Taricheas, Veſpaſian ſent thither his ſon Titus. Taricheas † was a ſtrong place, and had been fortified by Joſephus. The number of people who periſhed in the ſeveral attacks, and in taking the city, was ſix thouſand and five hundred.

After ‡ which, Veſpaſian ſat upon his tribunal, to conſider what ſhould be done with the people that remained. And at length by his order all the old men and other uſeleſs people, to the number of twelve hundred, were ſlain. Out of the young men he choſe ſix thouſand of the ſtrongeſt, whom he ſent to Nero to work at the Iſthmus. The reſt he ſold for ſlaves, who were in number thirty thouſand and four hundred. This was done on the eighth day of September.

The place § to which Veſpaſian went next was Gamala; where he met with great difficulties, and many of the Romans were ſlain. It was taken at laſt on the 23d day of October. When there was no way of eſcaping left, many Jews threw their children, their wives, and themſelves, from the hill on which the citadel was built into the deep valley below. The number of thoſe who thus precipitated themſelves was computed to be five thouſand. The reſt amounted to four thouſand. For here the Romans ſpared none, not even infants. None eſcaped, except two women.

To ‖ Giſchala Veſpaſian ſent Titus. Here about ſix thouſand were ſlain. But John, ſon of Levi, who had commanded in the place, eſcaped, and got to Jeruſalem, with ſome others; which, as our hiſtorian ſays **, was the work of God, who ſaved John for the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

" Thus," ſays †† Joſephus, " was all Galilee ſubdued, after it had " coſt the Romans much labour.

The ‡‡ next chapter of our author contains an account of the ſtate of things in Jeruſalem, after John came into it. Where he likewiſe ſays: " At §§ the ſame time there were diſturbances, and " civil wars in every city. And all they who were quiet from the " Romans, turned their hands one againſt another. At this time " robbers, and others of the worſt characters, came into the city, " where it had been long uſual to receive all who came. But their " numbers conſumed thoſe proviſions, which might have been of " uſe in a ſiege."

They ‖‖ now exerciſed tyranny over the moſt conſiderable men. Antipas, a man of royal lineage, the moſt potent man in the city, to whom the care of the public treaſure had been committed, they laid hold of, and ſent to priſon: and after him Levias, a man of great diſtinction, and Sophas, ſon of Raguel, a man of like eminence, and both of royal lineage. And *** not thinking themſelves ſafe whilſt they were living, they ſent ſome men of deſperate characters, to put them to death in the priſon.

* Ib. § 7. † Cap. x. 1—10. ‡ § 10.
§ De B. J. l. 4. cap. 1. § 1—10. ‖ Ibid. cap. ii. n. 1—5.
** Θεῷ δὲ ἦν τὸ ἔργον ἅπερ τὸ σῴζοντας τὸν Ἰωάννην ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ὄλεθρον. § 3.
†† Γαλιλαία μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἅπασα, πολλοῖς ἱδρῶσι προγυμνάσασα Ῥωμαίους. § 5.
‡‡ Ib. cap. 3. §§ Ib. § 2, 3. ‖‖ § 4. *** § 5.

Diſſentions

Diſſenſions * increaſing, there were ſlain † in one night eight thouſand and five hundred, and afterwards ‡ twelve thouſand of the better ſort, beſide many others. Here alſo are mentioned by name, as put to death by the zealots or others, divers men of great eminence, whoſe deaths our hiſtorian laments in pathetic terms: Ananus § the moſt ancient of the High-Prieſts; Jeſus alſo High-Prieſt, inferior to Ananus, but yet a perſon of great eminence; and Zacharias ſon of Baruch, different from Zacharias mentioned in Matt. xxiii. 35. and Luke xi. 51. as was ſhewn in another place ‖.

Soon ** after this, was put to death by the zealots Gorion, a man of great eminence for his own virtues, as well as upon account of his family. Nor did Niger the Peraite eſcape their hands, though he had ſeen ſo ſerviceable to them in this war. "When †† they were "killing him, he uttered this imprecation upon them, that, beſide "the war, they might undergo famine and peſtilence, and after that "come to the mutual ſlaughter of each other. All which imprecations God ratified againſt thoſe wicked men. And moſt juſtly did "they ſoon after reap the fruit of their madneſs in their mutual diſſenſions."

Theſe ‡‡ things being heard of in the Roman camp, the commanders were for haſtening the attack upon the city. But Veſpaſian, as Joſephus ſays, anſwered them, that the Jews were not now making armour, nor building walls: but they are every day tearing themſelves to pieces by inteſtine wars and diſſenſions; and ſuffer greater miſeries than could be inflicted upon them by us, if they were in our hands. And it was the beſt way to let the Jews deſtroy one another.

Theſe things we ſuppoſe to have happened at the end of the year 67, and the begining of 68.

"However, Veſpaſian was not inattentive to affairs, and took "care to reduce other places, before he went to Jeruſalem. He then "left Ceſarea for a while, and marched to Gadara, the metropolis "of Perea, as Joſephus ſays, and entered it on the fourth day of "March.

"After which he returned to Ceſarea, and left Placidus to carry "on the war in thoſe parts; who §§ took Abila, Julias, and Beſemoth, and other ſmaller cities and villages, as far as the lake Aſphalites. Inſomuch that now all Perea was in the hands of the "Romans, excepting Macherus. This expedition was very fatal to "the Jews. Many of the Jewiſh people were ſlain by the ſword, "others were driven into the River Jordan. The number of the "ſlain was not leſs than fifteen thouſand, beſides two thouſand and "two hundred which were made captives. And Placidus had a "rich booty of aſſes, and ſheep, camels, and oxen. This diſaſter "was equal to any that had yet befallen the Jews."

* L. 4. cap. v. Et conf. cap. iii. § 7. † Cap. v. § 1.
‡ Μύριοι δὲ καὶ δισχίλιοι τῶν εὐγενῶν οὕτω διεφθάρησαν. § 3.
§ § 2. et 4. ‖ See Credibility, P. i. B. 2 ch. 6. p. 902, &c.
** Ib. cap. vi. § 1. †† Ib. § 1. ‡‡ Ib. § 2. §§ L. iv. cap. vii.

In

In the mean time * Vespasian with a part of his army went from Cesarea to Antipatris: where he spent two days in settling the affairs of that city. On the third day he marched on, laying waste and burning all the villages. And when he had laid waste all the places about the toparchy of Thamas, he passed on to Lydda and Jamnia. And then came to Ammaus. Thence he went to the toparchy of Bethleptephon. And destroying that and other neighbouring places, he slew more than ten thousand, and made captives more than a thousand. And on the second day of the month of July he pitched his camp at Corea, not far from Neapolis, called by the people of the country Mabortha. And then went to Jericho.

Not long afterwards he returned to Cesarea. And † now, when he was getting ready all his forces for the siege of Jerusalem, he hears of the death of Nero, which happened on the tenth of June, in the year of our Lord 68. Wherefore Vespasian for a while put off his intended expedition against Jerusalem: waiting to see to whom this empire would be transferred, and expecting to receive orders from him.

During the remaining part of the year 68, and the year 69, little was done by the Romans in the war against the Jews ‡. They kept garrisons in the places already conquered, and fortified some places. But they made little progress, and the siege of Jerusalem was deferred. This delay was a favourable opportunity for the Jewish people to consider and relent, and make peace with the Romans their enemies, having first repented of their sins, and humbled themselves before God. But nothing of that kind came to pass. They went on in their old way, quarrelling among themselves, and forming parties, weakening themselves by divisions and contentions, and thereby hastening their ruin.

Our Lord foresaw this, as appears from the terms of all his predictions concerning them. He foresaw, that nothing would reclaim them, after his own teachings had failed of the effect. "When he "was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying; If "though hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that "belong to thy peace. But now they are hid from thy eyes. For "the days will come upon thee, that thy enemies shall compass thee "round, and lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within "thee, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41—44. He would still send among them prophets, wise men, and scribes, his Apostles and Evangelists. But they would not hearken to them. They would reject their message, and abuse them. Matt. xxiii. 34.

At § this time, says Josephus, a new war begun at Jerusalem. And Simon, son of Gioras, who for a while had been troublesome to the people there by his furious attacks upon the place, was ad-

* Ib. cap. viii. 1. † Ib. cap. ix. 1. 2.
‡ Nihil hoc anno alicujus momenti in Judæa gestum. Pagi Ann. 69. n. xiii.
§ Ἐπανίστασι δὲ ἄλλος τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις πόλεμος. L. 4. c. ix. § 3. in.

mitted

mitted * into the city, in the month of April, near the end of the third year of the war.

On the third day of July in the year of our Lord 69, Veſpaſian was proclaimed emperor † by the Roman army in Judea; as ‡ he had been proclaimed on the firſt day of the ſame month at Alexandria, which day was reckoned the beginning of his reign.

And may we not be allowed to ſuppoſe, that Veſpaſian and Titus were thus advanced by way of recompenſe for their ſervices, as inſtruments in the hand of Providence for inflicting that puniſhment upon the Jewiſh people which their crying ſins deſerved, and thus accompliſhing the predictions concerning it? We cannot ſay, that they were truly virtuous. But they were perſons of great eminence and many abilities. And they had a more ſocial and benevolent diſpoſition, than many others. Titus in particular is repreſented by Roman authors, as a man of a very amiable § character. And Joſephus, who was preſent with him in the war, often ſays, that he unwillingly treated the Jewiſh people ſo ſeverely as he did, and that he often made them offers of mercy, if they would lay down their arms, and accept of reaſonable terms.

Veſpaſian ‖, not long after this, went to Alexandria, and thence to Rome, leaving his ſon Titus, to carry on the war in Judea.

Veſpaſian ſtayed ſome months at Alexandria, waiting for a fair wind and good weather, or upon account of ſome political views and conſiderations. Several extraordinary things are related to have happened during his ſtay there; which are related very briefly by ** Dion Caſſius, more particularly by †† Suetonius, and ſtill more prolixly by ‡‡ Tacitus.

"Two

* Cap. ix. § xii. † Ib. cap. x.

‡ "Initium ferendi ad Veſpaſianum Imperii Alexandriæ cœptum, feſtinante Tiberio "Alexandro, qui kal. Jul. ſacramento ejus legiones adegi. Iſque primus principatus dies "in poſterum celebratus, quamvis Judaicus exercitus v. nonas Jul. apud ipſum juraſſet, eo "ardore, ut ne Titus quidem filius exſpectaretur, Syriâ remeans, et conſiliorum inter Mu-"nicianum et patrem nuntius." Tacit. Hiſt. 2. cap. 79. Conf. Sueton. Veſpaſian. cap. 6. Vid. et Pagi Ann. 69. n. vii. et Baſnag. Ann. 69. n. xxi.

§ "Titus, cognomento paterno, amor ac deliciæ humani generis." Sueton. Tit. cap. i.

‖ Joſ. De B. J. l. 4. cap. xi. ** Dio, l. 66. n. 8. p. 1082.

†† "Auctoritas et quaſi majeſtas quædam, ut ſcilicet inopinato et adhuc novo Principi, "deerat: hæc quoque acceſſit. E plebe quidam luminibus orbatus, item alius debili crure, "ſedentem pro tribunali pariter adierunt, orantes opem valetudinis, demonſtratam a Se-"rapide per quietem: reſtituturum oculos, ſi inſpuiſſet: confirmaturum crus, ſi dignaretur "calce contingere. Cum vix fides eſſet rem ullo modo ſucceſſuram, ideoque ne experiri "quidem auderet: extremo hortantibus amicis, palam pro concione utrumque tentavit, "nec eventis defuit." Sueton. Veſpaſ. cap. vii.

‡‡ "Per eos menſes, qui Veſpaſianus Alexandriæ ſtatos æſtivis flatibus dies, et certa maris "opperiebatur, multa miracula evenere quis cœleſtis favor et quædam in Veſpaſianum in-"clinatio numinum oſtenderetur. Ex plebe Alexandrina quidam oculorum tabe notus, genua "ejus advolvitur, remedium cæcitatis expoſcens gemitu: monitu Serapidis dei, quem de-"dita ſuperſtitionibus gens ante alios colit. Precabaturque principem, ut genas et ocu-"lorum orbes dignaretur reſpergere oris excremento. Alius manu æger, eodem deo auc-"tore, ut pede ac veſtigio Cæſaris calcaretur, orabat. Veſpaſianus primo irridere, aſper-"nari: atque illis inſtantibus, modo famam vanitatis metuere, obſecratione ipſorum, et "vocibus adulantium, in ſpem induci: poſtremo æſtimari a medicis jubet, an talis cæcitas "ac debilitas ope humana ſuperabiles forent. Medici varie differere: Huic non exetam "vim luminis, et redituram, ſi pellerentur obſtantia: illi obliquos in pravum artus, ſi fa-"lubris vis adhibeatur, poſſe integrari. . . Igitur Veſpaſianus cuncta fortunæ ſuæ pa-

"reri

" Two men of low rank of Alexandria, one of them blind, the " other lame in one of his hands, came both together to him in a " humble manner, saying, that they had been in a dream admonished " by the god Serapis to apply to him for cure of their disorders. " Which they were assured might be done for the one, if he would " be pleased to anoint his eyes and face with his spittle; and for the " other, if he would vouchsafe to tread upon his hand. Vespasian, " as is said, hesitated for a while. However, the Physicians having " been consulted, they gave their opinion, that the organs of sight " were not destroyed in the blind man, and that sight might be re- " stored, if obstacles were removed; and that the other's hand was " only disjointed, and with proper remedies might be set right again. " At length, moved by the entreaties of the distempered persons, " and encouraged by the flatteries of those about him, Vespasian " performed what had been desired. And the effect was answerable. " One of them presently recovered the use of his hands, and the " other his sight."

I do not see reason to believe, that any miracle was now wrought. It was a contrivance between Vespasian and his friends and favourites. Nor * could it be safe for any to examine and make remarks upon an event, which an emperor and his favourites recommended to public belief.

Suetonius has accounted for these stories in the introduction to his narration, saying, that " somewhat was wanting to give dignity " and authority to a new-chosen emperor." And at the beginning of his life of Vespasian, he observes, that " † the Flavian family was " not renowned for its antiquity." And it is easy for any to discern, from several things said by Suetonius and Tacitus, that Vespasian was very willing to encourage the belief of extraordinary things concerning himself.

I think, that what Spartian ‡ writes of some miracles ascribed to Adrian, may illustrate this history. And therefore I have transcribed him below very largely. Spartian lets us know, that Marius Maximus, who before him had writ the Life of Adrian, and some other emperors, said, those miracles were mere fictions. And

" rere ratus, nec quidquam ultra incredibile, læto ipse vultu, erecta quæ astabat " multitudine, jussa exsequitur. Statim conversa ad usum manus, ac cæco reluxit dies. " Utrumque qui interfuere nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendacio pretium." Tacit. Hist. 4. cap. 81.

* " Ad rei ipsius veritatem quod adtinet, non facile adfirmantibus credere licet, cum vix " tutum esset id negare, quo Imperatori obsequentiores Ægyptii, et quod proinde intererat " Imperatoris, verum videri. Fraudes ejus retegere, qui fallere vult, et omnibus Reipub- " licæ copiis instructus est, nunquam tutum fuit, &c." Cleric. Ann. 138. n. iii.

† Imperium suscepit, firmavitque tandem gens Flavia: obscura illa quidem, ac sine " majorum imaginibus." Vespasian. cap. i.

‡ " Ea tempestate supervenit quædam mulier, quæ diceret, somnio se monitam, ut in- " sinuaret Adriano, ne se occideret, quod esse bene valiturus: quod cum non feciset esse " cæcatam: Jussam tamen iterum Adriano eadem diceret, atque genua ejus oscularetur, " receptura visum, si id feciset. Quod cum insomnium implesset, oculos recepit quum agna " quæ in fano erat, ex quo venerat, oculos abluisset. Venit et de Pannonia quidam natus " cæcus ad febrientem Adrianum, eumque contigit: quo facto et ipse oculos recepit, et " Adrianum febris reliquit: quamvis Marius Maximus hæc per simulationem facto com- " memoret." Spartian. Hadrian. cap. 25.

says

says the learned and judicious Reimar in his notes upon Dion Cassius: "Nor * ought we to form any other judgement of the miracles "ascribed to Vespasian." And perhaps it may deserve notice, that notwithstanding such fine things were ascribed to Vespasian, Dion presently afterwards says, "he † was not at all acceptable to the "Alexandrians, but they hated him, and ridiculed and reproached "him both in public and private."

However, Crevier's observation is to this effect. "At ‡ the same "time, we ought carefully to observe, that these disorders which "Vespasian cured, were not of an incurable nature. And conse-"quently, we are at liberty to think, that the healing them did not "exceed the power of the demon." And, indeed, Popish saints and Heathen demons are much alike. Nor is there any great difference between Heathen and Popish credulity.

I cannot forbear to take notice of one remarkable history in this reign §. Sabinus ‖, in Gaul, engaged with some others in a revolt from the Romans, but was soon defeated. He might then have escaped into Germany. But affection for his wife, the best of women, whom he could not carry with him, led him into another scheme, which he communicated to two only of his freedmen, in whom he could confide. His country-house was burnt down, and he was supposed to have perished in the flames. But really he retired into a large subterraneous cavern, which he had near it. And his wife Epponnina abandoned herself to all the excesses of grief, and for three days and three nights refused to take any sustenance. Sabinus, hearing of it, and dreading the consequences, sent one of his freedmen to her, to assure her of his life, and to advise her to keep up the appearance of a mourner, still avoiding extremities. Afterwards she had access to him, and bore two children, of which she delivered herself in the cavern. By various artful pretences and the faithfulness of friends, the truth was kept secret, and Sabinus laid concealed nine years; in which interval there were once some hopes of obtaining the emperor's pardon; and Epponnina had Sabinus to Rome, so disguised that none knew him. But being disappointed in those expectations, they returned to the place of their retreat. At ** length Sabinus was discovered. He, and Epponnina, and their two sons were brought before Vespasian. She behaved with becoming firmness, yet endeavoured to move the emperor's

* "Sed Marius Maximus hæc per simulationem facta commemorat. Ita diserte Spar-"tianus Hadr. c. 25. Nec aliter de Vespasiani miraculis existimandum." Reimar. in Dion Cass. l. 66. § 50. p. 1083.

† Τὸ μὲν θεῖον τάπτοις αὐτὸν εἰρμνυεν. Οὐ μέντοι ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ἔχαιρον αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάνυ ἔχθοντο. κ.λ. Dio, p. 1082.

‡ Hist. of the Rom. Emp. vol. VI. p. 32.

§ See Tillem. Vespasian. art. vi. & xvii. Crevier's Hist. of the Roman Emperors, vol. VI. p. 103, 104.

‖ "Fusi Lingones. Sabinus festinatum temere proelium pari formidine deseruit. Utque "famam exitii sui faceret, villam, in quam perfugerat, cremavit. Illic voluntaria morte "interiisse creditus. Sed quibus artibus latebrisque vitam per novem annos traduxerit, simul "amicorum ejus constantiam, insigne Epponinæ uxoris exemplum, suo loco reddemus." Tacit. Hist. 4. cap. 67.

** Dio, l. 66. p. 1090.

pity,

pity, presenting her two sons to him. "These," says she, "Cæsar, "I have brought forth, and nursed in the cavern, that I might in- "crease the number of your supplicants." And, as is said, neither the emperor himself, nor any others with him, could refrain from tears. However, perceiving that he did not yield, she then upbraided him, and told him, she had lived more happily in the darkness of a cave, than he upon his throne. Sabinus and his wife were condemned, but the children were spared. Plutarch says *, "that "thereby Vespasian provoked the vengeance of heaven, and brought "upon himself the extinction of his family. It was," says he, "the "most tragical action of that reign, a thing which neither gods nor "demons could bear the sight of." Indeed, not only he, but Tacitus and Dion, shew a dislike of that action. But we have not Tacitus's conclusion of the story, he having deferred it to a following book, which is now wanting. It must appear not a little strange, that a general and his wife should be put to death nine years after a disturbance had been suppressed, and which had no bad consequences; when likewise, of the two miscreant rebels and tyrants at Jerusalem, one only was condemned to death, and the other to perpetual imprisonment. Vespasian did not live long after this. We now proceed in our history.

About † this time the Jews became divided into three parties or factions: the leaders of which were John, Eleazar, and Simon: by whom the city, and every part of it, and the temple itself, were filled with slaughter and bloodshed. This happened, as ‡ Josephus expressly says, whilst Titus was with his father at Alexandria: and must therefore be rightly placed by us in the year 69: and perhaps not far from the end of it. "So," as the same writer says, "one "faction fought against the other. Which § partition in evil cases "may be said to be a good thing, and the effect of divine justice."

Eleazar ‖ had the temple, John was below him in the city, Simon had the upper part of the city. Simon ** had with him ten thousand, beside the Idumeans. His own men had fifty commanders, of which he was supreme. The Idumeans, that joined with him, were five thousand, and had ten commanders. With Eleazar were two thousand and five hundred of the zealots. John had six thousand armed men under twenty commanders. But soon after the beginning of the siege, these two parties united into one: after which there were but two factions, John's and Simon's.

"But before that union, whilst they were in three parties, out of "spight to each other, as it seems, they set fire †† to several store- "houses, that were full of corn and other provisions, as if they "had done it on purpose to serve the Romans: destroying what "would have been sufficient for a siege of many years. So they

* Erot. sub fin. † L. 5. cap. i. § 1. ‡ Ibid.
§ ἐπεὶ ἂν τις ἐν κακοῖς ἀγαθὸν εἴποι, καὶ δίκης ἔργον. Ibid.
‖ Ib. § 2. 3. ** L. 5. cap. vi. 1. Vid. et cap. iii. 1.
†† ὑπεμπίπρασι τὰς οἰκίας σίτου μεστὰς, καὶ πανδοκείων ἐπιπλέων. καίοντες δὲ πλὴν ὀλίγων πάντα τὸν σῖτον, ὃς ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἐπ' ὀλίγα διήρκεσεν ἂν πολιορκουμένοις. λιμῷ γὰρ ἁλῶναι ἄνευ πόνου ἀδύνατον ἦν, εἰ μὴ τοῦτον ἑαυτοῖς προπαρεσκεύασαν. L. 5. cap. i. § 4.

" were taken with the famine; which could not have been, if they " had not by this means brought it upon themſelves. So ſays our Jewiſh hiſtorian.

Titus * now leaves Alexandria, and comes to Ceſarea, deſigning to move forward to Jeruſalem, and lay ſiege to it: having with him an army of about ſixty thouſand men, Romans and auxiliaries. He † pitcheth his camp at the place called Scopus, making however two other encapments at a ſmall diſtance, one of which was on the mount of Olives. He ‡ preſented himſelf before the city about the time of Paſſover, which was on the fourteenth day of the month of April, in the year of Chriſt 70. Here he met with difficulties at the firſt, as the Jews made furious ſallies upon his army. Some of his ſoldiers were put by them into diſorder, and ſuffered very conſiderably.

The § city of Jeruſalem was ſurrounded by theee walls, excepting in ſuch parts where were deep vallies, which rendered the place inacceſſible. There it had but one wall. On ‖ the fifteenth day of the ſiege, which was the ſeventh day of May, the Romans got poſſeſſion of the firſt wall, and demoliſhed a great part of it. Titus then encamped within the city **, in a place called the Aſſyrians camp. On †† the fifth day after that, he got poſſeſſion of the ſecond wall, but was repulſed and beat out of it again. " Where- " upon thoſe Jews, who were armed, and were the fighting men, " as our hiſtorian ſays, were much elevated, perſuading themſelves " that the Romans could never conquer the city. For ‡‡ God had " blinded their minds for the tranſgreſſions which they had been " guilty of, ſo that they did not conſider the ſuperior force of the " Romans, nor diſcern how the famine was creeping in upon them. " For hitherto they had fed themſelves out of the public diſtreſſes, " and drank the blood of the city. But poverty was now become " the lot of many good men, and a great many had already periſhed " for want of neceſſaries. But they ſuppoſed the deſtruction of " the meaner people to be a benefit to them." However, Titus renewed the attack. The Jews defended themſelves reſolutely for three days. But on the fourth day he again became maſter of that wall, and then he demoliſhed all that part which lay to the north, and fortified the ſouth ſide with towers, and placing ſoldiers in them. And then conſidered how he might attack the third and inmoſt wall.

Now §§ Titus thought fit to relax the ſiege for a while, in order to eaſe the ſoldiers, and to pay them ſubſiſtence-money, as alſo to ſee whether the Jews would relent, and make ſome propoſals for ſurrendering, that he might ſhew them mercy.

Moreover, Joſephus ‖‖, by order of Titus, took this opportunity, to addreſs the Jews in a pathetic diſcourſe; having ſought out a place

* De. B. J. l. 4. cap. xi. n. 5. L. 5. cap. i. et cap. ii. 1. † Cap. ii. § 3.
‡ Cap. iii. 1. § L. 5 cap. iv. ‖ . . . cap. vii. § 2. ** . . . ib. § 3.
†† Cap. viii. § 1, 2.
‡‡ Ἐπισκότει γὰρ ἀυτῶν ταῖς γνώμαις διὰ τὰς πεπραγμένας ὁ Θεὸς. κ. λ. Ib. § 2.
§§ L. 5 cap. ix § 1. ‖‖ § 3 4.

to ſtand in, where he might be heard, and be in ſafety. In that ſpeech he entreats the Jews to ſave themſelves, their temple, and their country, and tells them, that they were fighting againſt God.

"Moreover," ſays he, "as for Titus, thoſe ſprings, which were "almoſt dried up, when they were in your power, ſince his coming, "they run more plentifully than they did before. Accordingly, you "know, that Siloam, as well as all the other ſprings about the city, "did ſo far fail, that water was ſold in pitchers: whereas they now "have ſuch a quantity for your enemies, as is ſufficient for them-"ſelves, and for their cattle, and for watering gardens. The "ſame wonderful ſign you had experience of formerly, when "the aforementioned king of Babylon made war againſt us, "who took this city, and burnt the temple: though * the men "of that time, I believe, were far from being ſuch tranſgreſſors as "you are."

With regard to that particular, the flowing of the ſprings without the city in the time of the king of Babylon, Mr. Whiſton ſays in a marginal note upon the place, "The hiſtory of this is now wanting "elſewhere."

Four days were ſpent in that relaxation. On the fifth day, when no offers of peace came from the Jews, Titus began to raiſe new banks at ſeveral places.

"The † famine now began to be very ſevere. And with the fa-"mine encreaſed alſo the madneſs of the ſeditious [as Joſephus "calls them, meaning John and Simon, and the officers under "them]. There could no corn appear publicly any where, but "thoſe robbers came running for it. They alſo ſearched private "houſes. If they found any corn, they tormented the people, be-"cauſe they had denied it. If they found none, they tormented "them nevertheleſs, becauſe they ſuppoſed the people had con-"cealed it."

Here ‡ Joſephus enlargeth upon the miſeries of the people, and the great wickedneſs of their preſent governors. "But," ſays he, "it is impoſſible to enumerate every inſtance of the iniquity of thoſe "men. But, in a word, never did any city ſuffer ſo great calami-"ties. Nor was there ever from the beginning of the world any "time more fruitful of wickedneſs, than that.—Theſe were the "men, who overthrew the city, and compelled the Romans un-"willingly to gain a diſagreeable victory. They did little leſs than "throw fire upon the temple, and ſeemed to think it came too "ſlowly."

"At § this time many came out of the city, to ſeek for food, "or with a view of making an eſcape, who were apprehended by "the Romans, and crucified before the walls. And many of them "were ſcourged before they were crucified. This ſeemed to Titus "very grievous. For five hundred Jews were taken in a day, and "ſometimes more. Nevertheleſs he allowed of it. To diſmiſs them,

* . . . ἀλλ' οἶμαι τῶν τότε ἡσθησόμενον πλείω ἢ ὑμᾶς. Ib. § 4. p. 350. Haverc.
† L. 5. cap. x. § 1, 2. ‡ cap. x. § 4, 5. § cap. xi. § 1.

"and

" and let them go off, would not have been ſafe. Nor could he " ſpare men enough to keep guard upon ſo many. Moreover, he " hoped, that the ſight of theſe miſerable objects might diſpoſe them " in the city to think of ſurrendering. The ſoldiers, out of anger, and " hatred of the Jews, hung them upon the croſſes, ſome one way, " ſome another, as it were in jeſt. And ſo great was the number, " that room was wanting for croſſes, and croſſes were wanting for " bodies."

" Now * alſo Titus ordered the hands of ſome of them, who had " come out of the city, to be cut off. And then he ſent them back, " to let the people within the city know, that henceforward he " ſhould carry on the ſiege with vigour: however, ſtill wiſhing " them to repent, and not compell him to deſtroy their city, and " their admired temple. But they who ſtood upon the wall re- " turned reproaches upon him, and upon his father Veſpaſian; tell- " ing him, that death was better than ſlavery; and that ſo long " as they had breath, they would do the Romans all the harm " they could. As for the temple, they believed it would be pre- " ſerved by him who inhabited it. Having him for their helper, " they deſpiſed all his threatenings. For the event depended upon " God only."

The † Romans were employed in raiſing batteries. But though they had begun to raiſe them on the 12th day of May, they had much ado to finiſh them by the 29th day of the ſame month, after having laboured hard for ſeventeen days ſucceſſively. In which time, however, four batteries were compleated.

But John found means to undermine them, ſo that they fell down all at once, cauſing great confuſion among the Romans. And after that, Simon and his men made a furious ſally upon the Romans.

The Roman army was greatly diſcouraged, to ſee their batteries ruined in one hour, which had coſt them ſo much labour. And many deſpaired, thinking it impoſſible to take the city with the uſual engines of war.

Titus ‡ conſulted with his officers what might be fit to be done. At length it was determined to encompaſs the city with a wall. Which was compleated in three days, with towers at proper diſtances, to place ſoldiers in as garriſons.

Our bleſſed Lord ſays, Luke xix. 45. " For the days will come " upon thee, that thy enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and " compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide." Some think, that this prophecy was now particularly fulfilled in the building of the wall, here mentioned by Joſephus. Others may ſuppoſe, that it had it's accompliſhment, when the Romans laid ſiege to the city of Jeruſalem, and encompaſſed it with an army.

" The § famine now increaſing, it devoured whole houſes. For a " while, they who had no relations to take care of them, were buried

* Ib. § 5. † § 4. ‡ Cap. xiii. § 1, 2. § § 3.

" at the public expence. Afterwards the dead were thrown over th
" wall into the ditch.

" When * Titus, in going his rounds, near the valleys, below " the walls, saw the dead bodies, and the putrefaction iſſuing from " them, he fetched a deep ſigh, and, lifting up his hands to heaven, " called God to witneſs, that this was not his doing." However, he propoſed erecting new platforms: which was a difficult work, as all the timber near the city was already conſumed, and it was now to be fetched from a great diſtance.

In the next chapter †, Joſephus relates the death of Matthias, ſon of Boethus, one of the High-prieſts, and ſeveral other perſons of eminence, and divers others, who were ſlaughtered by order of Simon in a moſt ſhameful manner. Matthias was the perſon who had adviſed the admitting of Simon into the city, contrary to the inclinations of many others Matthias had four ſons, one of which had ſaved himſelf by getting away to Titus. The other three were all put to death together with their father: but with this expreſs order from Simon, that the ſons ſhould be firſt ſlain before the eyes of their father. Nor was burial allowed to them. The execution was committed by Simon to Ananus, ſon of Bamadus, the moſt barbarous man of his guards. After them were ſlain Ananias a Prieſt, and Ariſteas, ſcribe of the Sanhedrim, and fifteen other men of eminence among the people. They alſo ſlew ſuch as made lamentation for theſe perſons, without farther examination.

" Many ‡ did ſtill find means to get out of the city. Some leaped " down from the wall. Others went out of the city with ſtones in " their hands, as if they were going to fight with the Romans. But " moſt of them died miſerably. Some periſhed by exceſſive eating " upon empty ſtomachs. Moreover, ſome of them had ſwallowed gold, " and were detected afterwards in ſearching for it in their excrements. " This having been obſerved in a few inſtances, excited the avarice " of the ſoldiers, who concluded that all the deſerters were full of " gold. They therefore cut up their bellies, and ſearched their en- " trails. In this way," Joſephus ſays, " there periſhed two thouſand " in one night. Nor does it ſeem to me, that any miſery befell the " Jews more terrible than this.

" When Titus heard of it, he was greatly diſpleaſed, eſpecially " when he found, that not only the Syrians and Arabians had prac- " tiſed this cruelty, but the Romans likewiſe. He therefore gave " orders, that all who for the future acted in that manner ſhould be " put to death. But the love of money prevailed againſt the dread " of puniſhment. And indeed it was God who had condemned the " whole nation, and defeated every method taken for their preſerva- " tion."

About § this time John melted down many of the ſacred utenſils in the temple, to make uſe of them as inſtruments of war. He alſo diſtributed the ſacred wine and oil for common uſe to perſons,

* § 4. † cap. xiii. § 1. ‡ § 4, 5. § § 6, 7.

who

who in drinking, and anointing themſelves, waſted them in a profuſe manner.

" But * why do I ſtay to relate particularly theſe ſeveral calamities? For at this time Mannæus, ſon of Lazarus, fled out of " the city, and came to Titus, and told him, that through the one " gate, which had been entruſted to his care, there had been carried " out no fewer than a hundred and fifteen thouſand eight hundred " and eighty dead bodies, from the day that the Romans encamped " near the city, the fourteenth day of the month of April, to the firſt " day of July. That was a prodigious number. The man was not " a governor at the gate. But he was appointed to pay the public allowance for carrying the bodies out; and therefore was " obliged to number them. Others were buried by their relations: " though their burial was no other than to bring them, and caſt " them out of the city. After that man, there came to Titus ſeveral other deſerters of good condition, who told him, that the " whole number of the poor, who had been thrown out at the gates, " was no leſs than ſix hundred thouſand. The number of the reſt " could not be exactly known. They farther told him, that when " they were no longer able to carry out the dead bodies of the " poor, they laid them in heaps in large houſes, and then ſhut them " up. They likewiſe ſaid, that a meaſure of wheat had been ſold " for a talent. And that afterwards, when it had been impoſſible to " come out to gather herbs, becauſe the city was encompaſſed with " a wall, ſome were driven to ſuch diſtreſs, as to ſearch the common ſhores and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which " they found there: and that what they could not before endure to " ſee, they now made uſe of for food. When the Romans heard of " theſe things, they commiſerated their caſe. But the ſeditious, " who ſaw them, did not repent, till the ſame diſtreſs reached " themſelves. For † they were blinded by that fate, which was coming upon the city and themſelves."

There ends the fifth book of our Author's hiſtory of the Jewiſh War. The ſixth book contains the progreſs of the ſiege, and the miſeries of the people, till the city was taken by Titus.

The ‡ Roman batteries are now raiſed at the end of one and twenty days hard labour, and the miſeries of the city increaſe. The Romans begin to batter upon the walls of the tower called Antonia. The Jews made a vigorous defence. But the Romans gained poſſeſſion of it about the middle of July.

" Titus § thereupon ordered his ſoldiers to dig up the foundations of the tower Antonia, and make way for him to come up " with his whole army. And being informed, that on that very " day, the ſeventeenth of July, the daily ſacrifice had failed, and " that it had not been offered up for want of men, and that the

* § 7.

† Πεπλήρωντο γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆ χρειῶ, ὁ πᾶτε πόλει ἡ αὐτὰς ἦδη παρῆν.

‡ L. 6. cap. i. § 1—8.

§ cap. ii. § 1.

" people were greatly concerned at it, he ſent for Joſephus, and " commanded him to ſay to John the ſame things that had been ſaid " before. Accordingly Joſephus ſought for a proper place to ſtand " in, and in the name of Titus himſelf earneſtly exhorted John, " and thoſe that were with him, to ſpare their own country, and to " prevent that fire which was ready to ſeize upon the temple, and " to offer to God therein their uſual ſacrifices. But John caſt many " reproaches upon Joſephus, with imprecations, adding withal, that " * he did not fear the city ſhould ever be taken, which was God's " own city: After which, Joſephus went on with a pathetic ſpeech; " which, though it did not perſuade John and his adherents, was " not altogether without effect."

And † ſome watching for an opportunity fled to the Romans. Of whom were the High-prieſts Joſeph and Jeſus, and of ſons of High-prieſts three, and four ſons of Matthias, as well as one ſon of the other Matthias, formerly mentioned, who with three of his ſons had been killed by order of Simon, ſon of Gioras. And many others of the nobility. All whom Titus received very kindly, and ſent them to Gophna, a ſmall city, where they might live quietly, following their own cuſtoms. Which offer they chearfully accepted. But as they did not appear, the ſeditious within the city gave out, that thoſe men had been ſlain by the Romans. It was in vain, therefore, they ſaid, for any to go over to the Romans, unleſs they were willing to be put to death.

Titus ‡ therefore ſent for thoſe men from Gophna, and let them go round near the wall with Joſephus, to aſſure the people that they might come over to him with ſafety.

If all this be true, as Joſephus writes, it is a proof of the good temper of Titus Moreover, the Romans were now puſhing their conqueſts upon the Temple itſelf, which Titus ſeems unwilling to have deſtroyed.

" And," as Joſephus adds §, " Titus was much affected with the " preſent ſtate of things, and reproached John and thoſe with him. " Reminding them of the regard, which had been ſhewn to the tem- " ple by the Romans, who had allowed them to erect in the courts " of it a partition wall, with inſcriptions in Greek, forbidding all " foreigners to enter within thoſe limits, and allowing them to kill " ſuch as did ſo, though they were Romans. I call to witneſs, ſays " he, the Gods of the country, and every God, who ever had a " regard to this place (for I do not now ſuppoſe it to be regarded by " any of them): I alſo call to witneſs my own army, and the Jews " who are with me, and your ownſelves, that I do not compell you " to pollute your ſanctuary. And if you will change the place of " combat, no Roman ſhall come near it. For I will endeavour to " preſerve your temple, whether you will or not."

* ... ὡς ἂν μὴ πόλιν δείσειεν ἄλωσιν, Θεᾶ γὰρ ὑπάρχειν τὴν πόλιν.
† Ibid. cap. ii. § 2.
‡ Ib § 3.
§ § 4.

Such

Such * things were ſpoken by Titus, and by Joſephus after him in Hebrew, to John and the reſt with him. But they perverted it, as if all theſe fine offers proceeded from fearfulneſs, and not from any good-will to them.

Titus † therefore proceeded in his attacks. His ſoldiers fought with the Jews at the temple, whilſt he continued on the higher ground in Antonia, to obſerve their conduct.

They ‡ had now made a broad way from the tower Antonia to the Temple, and began to play on the temple with their battering engines.

The § fight was very deſparate. A cloyſter near Antonia was ſet on fire. On the 24th day of July the Romans ſet fire to another cloyſter, when the fire proceeded fifteen cubits farther.

" Whilſt ‖ the Jews and Romans were thus fighting at the tem-
" ple, the famine prevailed in the city, till at length they did not ab-
" ſtain from girdles and ſhoes. The very leather that belonged to
" ſhields they took off, and gnawed. Wiſps of old ſtraw became
" food to them."

At ** this time, a woman named Mary, of a good family, beyond Jordan, who had fled from her native place to Jeruſalem, to avoid the inconveniences of the war in the open country, when all ſhe had brought with her was conſumed, or taken from her by the rapacioufneſs of the tyrants and their adherents, was reduced to ſuch extremity, that ſhe killed her ſucking child, and dreſſed it for food.

On †† the eighth day of the month of Auguſt the Roman batteries were compleated; and Titus ordered the batteries to play upon the Temple. The battle between the Jews and Romans was very deſperate.

" Titus ‡‡ retired to the tower of Antonia; and reſolved the
" next day early in the morning to ſtorm the temple with his whole
" army, and to encamp about it. But certainly the divine ſentence
" had long ſince condemned it to the fire. And now the fatal day
" was come, according to the revolution of ages. It was the tenth
" day of the month Auguſt, the ſame day upon which it had been
" formerly burnt by the King of Babylon."

" The §§ temple was now on fire. Nevertheleſs Titus, ſtill de-
" ſirous to ſave it if poſſible, came near, and went into the ſanctua-
" ry of the temple with his commanders, and ſaw it, with what
" was in it. Which he found to be far ſuperior to the accounts of
" foreigners, and not inferior to our boaſtings and perſuaſion con-
" cerning it."

" As ‖‖ the fire had not yet reached the inner parts of the temple, Titus gave freſh orders for extinguiſhing the fire, and preſerving the temple. But to no purpoſe. Such was the enmity of the ſoldiers againſt the Jews, filled alſo with the hopes of plunder, and now animated with the rage of war.

* § 5. † § 5, 6. ‡ § 7. § § 8, 9. ‖ cap. iii. § 3.
** † 4. †† cap. iv. §. 1. ‡‡ § 5. §§ § 7. ‖‖ Ibid.

" Nor * can we forbear to wonder at the accuracy of the period. " For this happened, as before said, in the same month, and day of " the month, in which the temple had been burnt by the Babyloni- " ans. And the number of years from its first foundation by King " Solomon, to this its destruction in the second year of Vespasian, " are collected to be one thousand and thirty, and seven months, and " fifteen days. And from it's second building by Haggai in the se- " cond year of King Cyrus to its destruction by Vespasian, there " were six hundred and thirty-nine years, and forty-five days."

Whilst † the temple was burning, every thing was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those who were caught were slain. Nor was there any regard had to age, or condition. But children and old men, profane persons and priests, were all slain in the same manner.

" At ‡ this time the treasury-chambers were burnt, where was " an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of gar- " ments, with other precious things. For there it was, that the " riches of the Jews were heaped up. The soldiers also came to " the rest of the cloysters in the outer court, where were women and " children, and a mixed multitude of people, to the number of six " thousand. And before Cæsar had given any orders about it, the " soldiers in a rage set fire to the cloyster. Nor did any one of that " multitude escape with his life. A false-prophet was the occasion " of their destruction; who that very day had made proclamation " in the city, that God commanded them to go up to the temple, " where they would receive signs of deliverance. And indeed there " was then a great number of false-prophets suborned by the leaders " of the factions to impose upon the people, who told them, that " they should wait for deliverance from God."

" Thus," as our Author goes on in the words next following §, " was this miserable people deceived by impostors, who spoke lies in " the name of God. But they did not attend, nor give credit to " those prodigies, which evidently foretold their future desolation. " But, like men infatuated, who have neither eyes to see, nor minds " to consider, they disregarded the divine denunciations. There " was a star, a comet, resembling a sword, which stood over the " city, and continued for a year ‖. And before the rebellion, and be- " fore the war broke out, when the people were coming together in " great multitudes to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth " day of the month of April, at the ninth hour of the night, so " great a light shone round the altar and the temple, that it seemed " to be bright day. Which light continued for half an hour. This

* § 8. † cap. v. § 1. ‡ § 2. § Ib. § 3.

‖ Τοτε μεν ὅτε ὑπὲρ τὴν πολιν ἄστρον ἐστη ῥομφαία παρεμφερὲς, καὶ κομήτης ἐπ' ἐνιαυτὸν ὁμιλήσας.

Mr. Whiston's translation is: " Thus there was a star, resembling a sword, which stood " over the city: and a comet that continued a whole year." And he has a note to this purpose. " Whether Josephus means, that this star was different from that comet which " lasted a whole year, I cannot certainly determine. His words may favour their being " different one from another."

" to

" to the unskillful seemed to be a good sign: but by the sacred scribes " it was judged to portend what has since happened. And at the " same festival a heifer, as she was led by the High-priest to be sacri- " ficed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. More- " over the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple, which was " of brass, and very heavy, which was not without difficulty shut " in the evening by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with " iron, and was fastened with bolts that went deep into the floor, " which was made of one entire stone, was seen to open of its own " accord at the sixth hour of the night. Whereupon they who kept " watch at the temple, went to the captain, and told him of it. He " then came up thither, and not without difficulty had it shut again. " This also appeared to the vulgar a good sign: as if thereby God " thereby opened to them the gate of happiness. But the wiser " men concluded, that the security of the temple was gone, and that " the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. And they " said, it was a signal of the desolation that was coming upon them. " Beside these, a few days after that festival, on the one and twentieth " day of the month of May, there appeared a wonderful phænome- " non almost exceeding belief. And the account of it might seem " fabulous, if it had not been related by those who saw it, and if the " following events had not been answerable to such signs. For be- " fore sun-set chariots and troops in armour were seen carried upon " the clouds, and surrounding cities. And at the festival which " we call the Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the " inner court of the temple, as the custom was, to perform their mi- " nistrations, they first felt, as they said, a shaking, accompanied " with a noise, and after that a sound, as of a multitude, saying, " 'Let us remove hence!' But, which is still more awful, there was " one Jesus, son of Ananus, of a low condition, and a countryman, " who four years before the war began, when the city enjoyed pro- " found peace and flowing prosperity, came up to the festival, in " which it is the custom for us all to make tabernacles, who on a " sudden began to cry out in the temple: 'A voice from the east, a " voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Je- " rusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the " brides, a voice against the whole people!' This was his cry, as he " went about, both by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. " Some of the chief men were offended at this ill-boding sound, and, " taking him up, laid many stripes upon him, and had him beaten se- " verely. Yet he said not a word for himself, nor made any pecu- " liar complaint to them that beat him: but went on repeating the " same words that he had said before. Hereupon the magistrates, " thinking it to be somewhat more than ordinary, as indeed it was, " bring him before the Roman Governor: where he was whipped, " till his bones were laid bare. All which he bore, without shed- " ding any tears, or making any supplications. But with a mourn- " full voice, at every stripe, cried out: 'Woe to Jerusalem!' Albi- " nus, the governor, asked him, Who he was, and whence he came,

" and

" and why he uttered thoſe words. To all which he made no an-
" ſwer, but continued making his mournful denunciations to the
" city. Albinus, thinking him to be mad, diſmiſſed him. And
" thenceforward, to the time of the war, he did not go to any of the
" citizens; nor was he ſeen ſpeaking to any: but only went on
" with his mournful denunciation, as if it had been his premedita-
" ted vow: 'Woe, woe to Jeruſalem!' He did not give ill language
" to thoſe who beat him, as many did frequently. Nor did he thank
" thoſe who gave him food: but went on repeating to all the dole-
" ful preſage. But eſpecially at feſtivals his cry was the loudeſt.
" And ſo it continued for ſeven years and five months, without his
" growing hoarſe, or being tired therewith, till he ſaw his preſage
" fulfilled in the ſiege. Then he ceaſed. For going round upon
" the wall, with his utmoſt force he cried out: 'Woe, woe once
" more, to the city, and to the people, and to the temple!" And
" then at laſt he added: 'Woe, woe to my-ſelf alſo!' At which in-
" ſtant, there came a ſtone out of one of the engines, that ſmote him,
" and killed him immediately. And whilſt he was uttering theſe
" mournful preſages, he gave up the ghoſt.

" If * any one conſiders theſe things," adds Joſephus, " he will
" be convinced, that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways
" poſſible foreſhews to our race what is for their benefit: and that
" men periſh by thoſe miſeries, which they madly and voluntarily
" bring upon themſelves."

Thus I have tranſcribed this whole article of Joſephus at length, and in the place and order in which it ſtands in his own work. I muſt be ſo candid as to take notice of the reflexions which ſome learned men have made upon it.

To this purpoſe ſpeaks Dr. Willes, in his firſt † diſcourſe upon Joſephus: " The prodigies, that he ſaith happened before the de-
" ſtruction of Jeruſalem, would agree better to Livy or Tacitus,
" than to a Jewiſh hiſtorian.—The flying open of the great brazen
" gate of the temple is the ſame as happened at Thebes juſt before
" the great battle of the Lacedemonians at Leuctra, when the great
" gates of the temple of Hercules opened of themſelves, without any
" one's touching them. I omit many other things of the like na-
" ture: whence it is evident, that Joſephus endeavoured to Greciſe
" and ſhape the hiſtory of the Jews, as like as he could to thoſe of
" the Greeks and Romans." So Dr. Willes. And I ſhall tranſcribe below the paſſage of *Cicero de Divinatione* ‡, to which he refers.

Baſnage §, in his Hiſtory of the Jews ſpeaks after this manner. " Beſides, deception was eaſy in many of the things related by him.

* § 4.

† Prefixed to L'Eſtrange's edition of Joſephus, p. 3, 4. 8vo.

‡ " Quid? Lacedæmoniis paullo ante Leuctricam calamitatem, quæ ſignificatio facta eſt,
" cum in Herculis fano arma ſonuerunt, Herculiſque ſimulachrum multo ſudore manavit?
" At eodem tempore Thebis, ut ait Calliſthenes, in templo Herculis valvæ clauſæ repagulis,
" ſubito ſe ipſæ aperuerunt: armaque, quæ fixa in parietibus fuerant, ea ſunt humi inventa."
De Divin. l. 1. cap. 24. n. 74.

§ L. i. ch. viii. § 3. p. 224.

" The bright light round the altar in the night time; the cow that " brought forth a lamb, as ſhe was led to the altar; the chariots of " fire that were ſeen in the air, and paſſed over the city with a " frightful noiſe; are very liable to ſuſpicion: the opening of the " temple ſeems to be rather better atteſted than the others, becauſe it " is ſaid, that the magiſtrate came to ſhut it. But the meaning was " doubtful. To ſome it ſeemed to be an aſſurance, that God had " opened the treaſures of his benediction: whilſt others concluded, " that he had abandoned the protection of his temple. But it is " not eaſy to deny the truth of the hiſtory of the man, that cried, " ' A voice from the Eaſt, a voice from the Weſt!' and every day pre- " dicted the ruin of the city. For this man was brought before Al- " binus, who examined him. He was ſeverely ſcourged, and he " was often beaten by the people, who could not endure ſo diſmal a " noiſe; but he was all along unmoved. His cry continued for the " ſpace of ſeven years. At length he was killed upon the walls of " the city, at the beginning of the ſiege. This is not a thing about " which men might be deceived. Joſephus, who relates it, was at " Jeruſalem, when this preacher, who was treated as a mad man, " denounced its deſolation. And he might inform himſelf concern- " ing his death. So that if there are any things to which we ought " to attend, it is this, in which we muſt acknowledge ſomewhat ex- " traordinary." So ſays Baſnage.

I am inclined to go over, and examine every one of theſe prodigies.

" There * was a ſtar, a comet, reſembling a ſword, which ſtood " over the city, and continued for a year."

How Mr. Winſton underſtood this, has been ſeen already. L'Eſtrange tranſlates thus: " What ſhall we ſay to the comet that hung " over Jeruſalem, for one whole year together, in the figure of a " ſword?" Archbp. Tillotſon † in this manner: " A little before " their deſtruction," he tells us, " there hung over their city a fiery " ſword, which continued for a year together. A little before their " rebellion againſt the Romans, there appeared a comet, which " ſhined ſo clear in the temple, and about the altar, as if it had " been day." It muſt be confeſſed, that is not exact. Tillemont: " There ‡ was alſo a comet which appeared for a year, and over " Jeruſalem an extraordinary ſtar, which ſeemed to be a ſword. But " Joſephus does not ſay the time." Neither is this very exact. However, I have alſo tranſcribed below the words of Joſephus himſelf.

This is the firſt prodigy. And indeed it is a wonderful and very awful thing. A ſtar, reſembling a ſword, hanging over a city for a whole year.—Upon this we cannot forbear to obſerve, that Joſephus has not told us the time when this ſtar, or comet, appeared.

* Τοῦτο μὲν ὕπερ τὴν πόλιν ἄστρον ἔστη ῥομφαίᾳ παραπλήσιον, καὶ κομήτης παρατείνας ἐπὶ ἐνιαυτὸν κομήτης.

† As before, p. 554.

‡ " Il parut auſſi une comete pendant un an, et ſur Jeruſalem un aſtre extraordinaire, " qui ſembloit être une epée. Joſeph n'en marque pas les temps." Ruine des Juifs, art. 41.

He

He says, "It continued for a year." But does not say when. A very strange omission. I must take the liberty to add, that, if about the time of the siege of Jerusalem, or some period within a few years before, there had been a star, resembling a sword, which hung over that city for a year together; I should expect to find it in some author, beside Josephus, and an author that does not depend upon him, or borrow from him.

Tacitus * has mentioned several of the prodigies preceding the ruin of the Jewish people. But he does not mention this. However, it must be owned, that his omitting it is of no great importance, as he does not appear to have been careful to put down every thing of this kind.

2. It follows: "And before the rebellion, and before the war "broke out, when the people were come together in great multi- "tudes to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the "month of April, at the ninth hour of the night (or three hours "after midnight), so great a light shone round the altar, and the "temple, that it seemed to be bright day. Which light continued "for half an hour." This prodigy is related by Josephus so particularly and circumstantially, as happening too at the time of Passover, when Jerusalem was full of people, and in the year 65, as it seems that I am not at all disposed to contest the truth of it. I think it must have so happened. But the design of this appearance is ambiguous. And, as Josephus says, some thought it to portend good, others bad things. But that does not affect the truth of the fact.

3. "And at the same festival, a heifer, as she was led by the "High-Priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of "the temple." Here again, I hesitate. I am surprised to see so trifling a story in a grave writer. I think, Josephus inserted this to gratify his Greek readers.

4. The next prodigy is the opening of "the eastern gate of the "inner court of the temple at midnight:" which, as before observed by Dr. Willes, has such a resemblance with like stories told by credulous Heathen people, that it seems to be only an imitation of them, and has therefore the appearance of a fiction, by way of accommodation to the judgement of Heathen readers.

5. "Beside these, a few days after that festival, on the one and "twentieth day of the month of May, there appeared a wonderful phæ- "nomenon, almost exceeding belief. And the account of it might "seem fabulous, if it had not been related by those who saw it, "and if the following events had not been answerable to such signs. "For before sun-set, chariots and troops of soldiers in armour were "seen carried upon the clouds, and surrounding cities."

* "Evenerunt prodigia, quæ neque hostiis, neque votis piare fas habet gens superstitioni "obnoxia, religionibus adversa. Visæ per cœlum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma, et subito "nubium igne collucere templum. Expassæ repente templi fores, et audita major humanâ "vox, Excedere Deos: simul ingens motus excedentium." Tacit. Hist. l. 5. cap. 13.

Such

Such ſeeming appearances have often been the effect only of imagination, without any reality. But this is related by Joſephus ſo particularly, and with ſo much ſolemnity, that it is hard to conteſt the truth. And if it be true, this, and "the light ſurrounding "the altar and the temble," before mentioned, may be ſome of thoſe things intended by our Saviour, when he ſaid: "And fearful ſights, "and great ſigns, ſhall there be from heaven," Luke xxi. 11. Of this "Crevier ſpeaks in this manner *: "I ſay nothing of the armed "chariots and troops of warriors, that were ſeen fighting in the air. "That might be the natural effect of a phænomenon, then not un-"derſtood, but which we are now well acquainted with, and call "the Aurora Borealis, or northern light." A wiſe obſervation truly! Who ever before ſaw or heard of an Aurora Borealis in the day-time? Joſephus expreſsly ſays, that theſe chariots and warriors were ſeen "before ſun-ſetting."

6. "And at the feſtival which we call the Penticoſt, as the "Prieſts were going by night into the inner court of the temple, as "the cuſtom was, to perform their miniſtrations, they firſt felt, as "they ſaid, a ſhaking, accompanied with a noiſe, and then a ſound, "as of a multitude, ſaying, 'Let us remove hence."

This paſſage is quoted by † Euſebius, and this particular is taken notice of by ‡ divers ancient Chriſtian writers. But they do not always quote ſo accurately as might be wiſhed.

I beg leave to obſerve upon it, firſt of all, this is ſaid to have happened in the night-time, and therefore deſerves the leſs regard. Secondly, I do not know what miniſtrations the Prieſts had to perform in the inner temple in the night. Doubtleſs they kept watch at the temple by night as well as by day. But, ſo far as I can recollect, the miniſtrations at the temple, which were of divine appointment, were performed by day-light. Thirdly, the ſound of a multitude, ſaying, "Let us go hence," has much of an Heatheniſh air.

All theſe ſigns, or prodigies, juſt mentioned, (excepting the ſtar like a ſword, of which before,) ſeem to be placed by Joſephus in the year of Chriſt 65, the year before the war commenced.

7. The ſeventh and laſt is that of "Jeſus, ſon of Ananus, who, "four years before the war began, came up to the feſtival, which we "call the Feaſt of Tabernacles, and on a ſudden began to cry out: "A voice from the Eaſt—a voice againſt Jeruſalem and the temple. "And ſo it continued for ſeven years and five months, till he ſaw

* Hiſtory of the Roman Emeprors, vol. VI. p. 240.

† H. E. l. 3. cap. viii. et Dem. Ev. l. 8. p. 402. And ſee the Credib. vol. VIII. p. 60.

‡ Καὶ Ἰώσηπος δὲ μετὰ βραχὺν γενόμενος χρόνον, ἔφη, τινὰς ἀΐγέλους τὰς ἔτι παραμείνοντας, εἰ μὴ βούληθεν ἐκ ἵνοι μεταξῦν ., καταλιπεῖν ἀυτάς. Chr. in Jo. Hom. 64. al. 65. p. 390. T. 8.

"Joſephus quoque refert, virtutes angelicas, præſides quondam templi, tunc pariter con-"clamaſſe: Tranſeamus ex his ſedibus." Hieron. in Matt. xxvii. 51. T. 4. p. 139. Conf. ep. ad Hedib. § viii T. 4. P. i. p. 176.

"Unde et Joſephus in ſua narrat hiſtoria, quod poſtquam Dominus crucifixus eſt, et velum "templi ſciſſum eſt, ſive liminare templi fractum corruit, audita ſit vox in adytis templi "virtutum cœleſtium, tranſeamus ex his ſedibus." Id. in Ezech. cap. 47. p. 1053.

" his preſage fulfilled in the ſiege." He therefore began his cry near the end of the year 62. This laſt Joſephus calls " more awful " than the reſt, τὸ δὲ τούτων φοβερώτατον." And as Le Clerc * obſerves, " If it be true, Joſephus rightly ſays, it was ſomewhat " divine." I hope we may depend upon the truth of this hiſtory, which is related with ſo many particulars and circumſtances.

All theſe things Joſephus has recorded, as affecting ſigns, warnings, and preſages of great calamities coming upon the Jewiſh nation: omitting, entirely, the warnings, and predictions, and admonitions of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his Apoſtles after him, and alſo the three-hours darkneſs over the whole land of Judea, and the rending the veil of the temple, and the earthquake near Jeruſalem, at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion. And though all theſe ſigns and warnings related by himſelf, are conſidered by him as very affecting, he acknowledgeth, that they made not any great impreſſion upon his nation. And ſays: " But they did not attend, or give credit " to thoſe prodigies, which evidently foretold their deſolation. " But " like men infatuated, who have neither eyes to ſee, nor minds " to conſider, they diſregarded the divine denunciations." And his hiſtory verifies the truth and juſtneſs of this obſervation.

" Now † the Romans brought their enſigns to the temple, and ſet " them over againſt the eaſtern gate. There they offered ſacrifices " to them, and there they made Titus emperor, with the greateſt ac- " clamations of joy. And all the ſoldiers had ſuch vaſt quantities of " ſpoils, which they got by plunder, that in Syria a pound weight " of gold was ſold for half its former value."

There ‡ were ſome prieſts, as Joſephus ſays, ſitting upon the wall of the temple, who continued there till they were pined with hunger. Then they came down, and ſurrendered themſelves. When they were brought by the guards to Titus, they begged for their lives. But Titus anſwered, that the time of pardon was over as to them, that being deſtroyed, for the ſake of which alone he ſhould have ſaved them: and that it was very fit, that prieſts ſhould periſh with their temple. Whereupon he ordered them to be put to death.

Now § Simon and John, and they that were with them, deſire a conference with Titus. Which he granted. He placed himſelf on the weſtern ſide of the outer court of the temple, and there was a bridge that parted them. There were great numbers of Jews waiting with thoſe two tyrants, and there were alſo many Romans on the ſide of Titus. He ordered the ſoldiers to refrain their rage, and appointed an interpreter. And being conqueror, he ſpoke firſt. He then reproached them in very bitter terms, and very juſtly. And then concluded. However, I will not imitate your madneſs. " If " you will throw down your arms, and deliver up your bodies to " me, I grant you your lives. I will act like a mild father of a fa-

* Quæ ſi vera ſunt, non immerito Joſephus rem divinitus contigiſſe cenſuit." Cleric. H. E. An. 62. n. v.

‡ L. 6. cap. vi. § 1. ‡ Ibid. § § 2.

" mily.

" mily. What cannot be healed, ſhall be deſtroyed. The reſt I will " reſerve for my own uſe.

" They anſwered, they could not conſent to that, becauſe they " had ſworn never to do it. They aſked leave to go through the " wall that ſurrounded them, with their wives and children So " they would go into the deſert, and leave the city to him. At which " Titus was greatly provoked, that, when they were now already in " the caſe of men taken captives, they ſhould pretend to make their " own terms with him, as if they were conquerors. He then gave " orders, that proclamation ſhould be made to them, that henceforward none ſhould be allowed to come over to him as deſerters, " nor hope for ſecurity. For that now he would ſpare nobody, " but fight them with his whole army. He therefore gave orders " to the ſoldiers, both to burn and to plunder the city. On that day " however they did nothing. But the day following they ſet fire to " the repoſitory of the archives, to the council-houſes, to Acra and " to the place called Ophilas: at which time the fire proceeded as " far as to the palace of queen Helena, which was in the middle of " Acra. The lanes alſo were burnt down, as were all the houſes " that were full of the dead bodies of ſuch as had died by the " famine."

" On * the ſame day the ſons and brothers of king Izates, and " with them many other eminent men of the city †, got together, " and beſought Titus to give them his right hand for their ſecurity. " Whereupon, though he was now very angry, and much diſpleaſed " with all who were ſtill remaining, he did not depart from his " wonted moderation, but received them. However, he kept them " all in cuſtody. And having bound the king's ſons and kinſmen, " he took them with him to Rome, to be kept there as hoſtages for " the fidelity of their country."

Here, as I apprehend, we ſee a proof of the zeal of the Jewiſh proſelytes at this time. For ſuch were the relations of king Izates. Theſe perſons had choſen to reſide much in the holy city of Jeruſalem. Or they had come up thither to the feaſt of the paſſover this year, notwithſtanding the danger it was in from the approaches of the Roman army. And it was, as ſeems to me, a remarkable inſtance of the moderation of this prince, that he now ſhewed mercy to their perſons, who might have come over to him long before, and did not ſurrender themſelves till matters were brought to the utmoſt extremity, and after he had publicly declared that he would ſpare none.

Titus ‡ ſtill had difficulties remaining in taking the reſt of the city.

" Some § there were who deſerted to Titus, notwithſtanding the " care of the tyrants to prevent it. Theſe were all received by the " Romans, becauſe Titus grew negligent as to his former orders, and

* § 4.

† . . . παρὰ οἷς πολλοὶ τῶν ἐπισήμων δημοτῶν ἐκεῖ συνελθόντες, ἐκέτευσαν Καίσαρα, κ. λ.

‡ Cap. vii. et viii. § Cap. viii. § 2.

" becauſe

" becauſe the ſoldiers were weary of killing, and becauſe they hoped " to gain money by ſparing them. They therefore ſold them with " their wives and children, though at a very low price. For there " were many to be ſold, and but a few purchaſers. Indeed the num- " ber of thoſe who were ſold was prodigious. And * yet there were " forty thouſand of the people ſaved, whom Titus permitted to go " where they pleaſed."

And now were fulfilled thoſe words of Moſes, " And ye ſhall be " ſold for bond-men, and bond-women. And no man ſhall buy " you." Deut. xxviii. 68. And likewiſe thoſe words of our Lord, Luke xxi. 24. " And they ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and " ſhall be led away captive into all nations. And Jeruſalem ſhall " be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles " be fulfilled.

" At † this time one of the prieſts, ſon of Thebuthus, whoſe " name was Joſhua, upon his having ſecurity given him by the oath " of Cæſar, that he ſhould be preſerved, upon condition that he ſhould " deliver to him certain of the precious things depoſited in the tem- " ple, came out, and delivered to him from the wall of the temple " two candleſticks, like to thoſe that lay in the temple, together " with tables, and ciſterns, and vials, all of ſolid gold, and very hea- " vy. He alſo delivered to him the veils, and the garments of the " High-prieſts, with the precious ſtones, and many other veſſels be- " longing to the ſacred miniſtrations. And now was ſeized the trea- " ſurer of the temple, whoſe name was Phineas, who diſcovered to " him the coats and girdles of the prieſts, with a great quantity of " purple and ſcarlet, which were repoſited for the uſe of the veil: " as alſo a great deal of cinnamon and caſſia, and other ſweet ſpices, " which uſed to be mixed, and offered to God as incenſe, every day. " A great many other precious things and ornaments of the temple " were delivered by the ſame perſon. Which things ſo delivered to " Titus, obtained for that man the ſame pardon that was allowed to " ſuch as deſerted of their own accord.

" At ‡ length, after great labour, and againſt a furious oppoſition, " the Romans became maſters of the reſt of the city, and ſet their " enſign upon the walls in triumph, and with great joy. They " then plundered the houſes, and killed every one whom they met " with in the ſtreets. They ſet fire to the city, and made the ſtreets " run with blood, to ſuch a degree, that the fire of many houſes " was quenched with mens blood. However it ſo happened, that " when the ſlayers had left off in the evening, the fire greatly pre- " vailed in the night. As all was burning, came on to Jeruſalem " the eighth day of the month of September, a city, which had ſuf- " fered ſo many calamnities during the ſiege, of which it was upon " no other account ſo deſerving, as upon account of its producing " ſuch a generation of men, as occaſioned its overthrow.

* Οἱ δημόσιοι δὲ διεσάθησαν ὑπὲρ τετρακισμυρίους, ὧν ἐλεήσας Καῖσαρ, ἢ ἤθελον ἀνέκαζεν. Ibid.
† viii. § 3. ‡ § 4. 5.

" When

" When * Titus was come into this upper city, he admired ſome " places of ſtrength in it, and particularly thoſe ſtrong towers, which " the tyrants in their madneſs had relinquiſhed. And he expreſſed " himſelf in the following manner. We † have certainly had God " God for our helper in this war. It is God, who has ejected the " Jews out of their fortifications. For what could the hands of men " or any machines do, toward throwing down ſuch ‡ fortifications? " at which time he had many like diſcourſes with his friends. He " alſo ſet at liberty ſuch as had been bound by the tyrants, and " were ſtill in the priſons. And when he entirely demoliſhed the " reſt of the city, and overthrew it's § walls, he left thoſe towers to " be monuments of his fortune, which had fought with him, and had " enabled him to take what otherwiſe would have been impreg- " nable."

" The ‖ ſoldiers were weary of killing. But there were many ſtill " alive. Titus therefore gave orders, that none ſhould be killed, " but ſuch as were in arms, or made reſiſtance, and to take the reſt " captive. Nevertheleſs the ſoldiers ſlew the aged and the infirm. " But for thoſe who were in their flouriſhing age, and might be " uſeful to them, they drove them together into the temple, and ſhut " them up within the walls of the court of the women. Over whom " Titus ſet one of his freed-men, and Fronto, one of his friends, " who was to determine the fate of each one according to his deſert. " Many were ordered to be ſlain. But of the young men he choſe " out the talleſt, and the moſt beautiful, and reſerved them for the " triumph. Such as were above ſeventeen years of age, he bound, " and ſent them to work in the mines in Egypt. Titus alſo ſent a " great many into the provinces, as preſents to them, that they " might be deſtroyed in their theatres, either by the ſword, or by " wild-beaſts. They who were under ſeventeen years of age were

* Cap. ix. § 1. † Σὺν Θεῷ γ' ἐπολεμήσομεν.—κ. λ. ib.

‡ Undoubtedly Titus, upon entering into that part of the city, which was now taken, and ſo becoming maſter of the whole city of Jeruſalem, had ſome diſcourſes with his generals, ſuitable to the occaſion. But Joſephus, in imitation of the Greek and Roman hiſtorians, who made ſpeeches for their generals, embelliſheth here. And he makes Titus ſay ſome things, which he did not ſay. The tyrants, as Joſephus calls them, were guilty of mad conduct in their diviſions, in deſtroying, as they had done, many ſtores proper for ſieges, and in other reſpects. But Titus could not charge them with folly and madneſs in relinquiſhing the three towers here referred to. Joſephus has given a particular deſcription of them. De B. J. l. 5. cap. iv. § 3. They were ſtrong and lofty buildings, raiſed upon the north wall of the city. Herod had diſplayed his magnificence in them. But they were not fit for garriſons, or to be made places of defence. They were rather ſummer-palaces, fitted for diverſion and entertainment, with ſplendid apartments and ſumptuous furniture. The Jews did not relinquiſh any places of defence. They vigorouſly defended their ſeveral walls, and the tower Antonia, and the temple. They had fully exerciſed all the military ſkill and courage of Titus, and his many generals, and tired his ſoldiers: and induced them more than once to deſpair of victory, as our hiſtorian himſelf has informed us. It appears, however, from Joſephus, that Simon made uſe of the tower Phaſælus for his own habitation, during a good part of the ſiege. Τηνικαῦτα γεμὴν τυραννεῖον ἀπεδείξατο τὸν Σίμωνος. Ib. § 4. p. 330. in.

§ Αὐδὶς δὲ τὴν ἄλλην ἀφανίζων πόλιν, καὶ τείχη καθεισκάπτων, τούτους τοὺς πύργους κατέλιπε μνημεῖον εἶναι τῆς αὐτοῦ τύχης, ἢ συμπαλαίσασι χρησάμενος ἐκράτησε τῶν ἀλῶναι μὴ δυναμένων. L. 7. cap. ix. § 1.

‖ Cap. ix. § 2.

" ſold for ſlaves. And during the time that Fronto was determining " the fate of theſe men, there periſhed eleven thouſand for want of " food. Some of them had no food, through the ill-will of thoſe " who guarded them. Others would not take what was given " them. And indeed there were ſo many, that there was not food " for them."

Joſephus does not here ſpeak of any Jews being crucified at this time. Nevertheleſs, I apprehend, that many now ſuffered in that " manner. For in * one of the laſt ſections of his life, giving an account of things preſently after the city was taken, he ſays he was ſent by Titus, with Cerealis, one of his generals, and a thouſand horſe, to a village called Thekoa, to ſee whether it was a place fit for a camp. " As I came back," ſays he, " I ſaw many of the captives " crucified. Among them I diſcerned three of my former acquain- " tance, which gave me great concern. I thereupon went to Titus " with tears in my eyes, and ſpoke to him. Who immediately gave " orders to have them taken down, and that the beſt care ſhould be " taken of them for their recovery. However, two of them died un- " der cure. The third ſurvived."

" The † number of thoſe who were taken captive, during the " whole war, was computed to be ninety and ſeven thouſand. And " the number of thoſe who periſhed during the ſiege eleven hundred " thouſand. The greater part of them were indeed of the ſame na- " tion, but not inhabitants of the city. For they were come up from " all the country to the feſtival of unleavened bread, and were on a " ſudden ſhut in by the army. Which ‡ occaſioned ſo great a ſtrait- " neſs, that there came on a peſtilential diſorder, and then a fa- " mine, which was more ſevere."

And preſently afterwards. " This § great multitude was collected " from other places. The whole nation was ſhut up as in a priſon. " And the Roman army encompaſſed the city, when it was crouded " with inhabitants. Accordingly ‖ the multitude of thoſe who pe- " riſhed therein exceeded all the deſtructions that men or God ever " brought on the world.

" As ** many were hid in caverns, the Romans made ſearches after " them. If any were found alive, they were preſently ſlain. But " beſides them they found there more than two thouſand, ſome killed " by themſelves, and by one another, and more deſtroyed by fa- " mine. The ill ſavour of the dead bodies was offenſive. Never- " theleſs for the ſake of gain many of the ſoldiers ventured into the " caverns, where was found much treaſure.

" John †† and his brethren, who were with him in a cavern, " wanted food. Now therefore he begged, that the Romans would " give him the right hand for ſecurity, which he had often rejected " before. But Simon ſtruggled hard with the diſtreſs he was in, 'till

* De Vit. § 75. † § 3.

‡ Ὥστε τὸ πρῶτον ἀυλαῖς τὴν στενοχωρίαν γενέσθαι λοιμώδη φθοράν, αὖθις δὲ καὶ λιμὸν ἀκμάτερον. Ib. § 4.

‖ Πᾶσαν γὰρ ἀνθρωπίνην καὶ δαιμόνιον βροτῶν ὑπερβάλλει τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἀπολωλότων. Ib. § 4.

** § 4. †† Ib. § 4.

" he

" he was forced to surrender himself, as we shall relate hereafter. So " he was reserved for the triumph, and to be then slain. John " was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. And * now the Ro- " mans set fire to the extreme parts of the city, and burnt them down, " and demolished the walls of the foundation.

" Thus † was Jerusalem taken in the second year of the reign of " Vespasian, on the eighth day of the month of September. It " had been taken five times before. This is the second time of it's " desolation." Josephus then enumerates these several times, and computes how many years it was from the time of it's being first built. And then adds. " But neither it's antiquity, nor it's im- " mense riches, nor the reputation of the nation, celebrated through- " out the whole world, nor the great glory of it's religion, has been " sufficient to preserve it from destruction. Such was the end of the " siege of Jerusalem."

These are the last words of his sixth book of the Jewish war.

Then, at the begining of the seventh book, he says:

" And ‡ now, when no more were left to be slain, nor any more " plunder remained for the soldiers; Cesar gave orders, that they " should demolish to the foundation the whole city, and the temple: " leaving only the fore-mentioned towers Phasaelus, Hippicus, and " Mariamne, and so much of the wall, as was on the west side of " the city. That was spared, in order to afford a camp for those " who where to lye in garrison. But § as for all the rest of the " whole circumference of the city, it was so thoroughly laid even " with the ground, by those who dug it up to the foundation, that " there was nothing left to make those who came thither to believe " it had even been inhabited."

So said our Lord, Luke xix. 44. " And they shall lay thee even " with the ground, and thy children within thee. And they shall " not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest " not the time of thy visitation."

The soldiers who were left in garrison near the city, must have been instruments in digging up every part of it to the foundation. For Josephus afterwards, describing the journey of Titus through Palestine to Alexandria, and observing how Titus was affected at the sight of the deplorable condition of the place, has these expressions. " And ‖ no small part of it's riches had been found in it's ruins. " This the Romans dug up. They found a great deal of gold and " silver, and other precious things, which the owners had treasured " up under ground, against the uncertain fortunes of war. And " they were assisted by the captives in the discovery of such things."

And Eleazar, in one of his speeches at Massada, to be farther taken notice hereafter, where he persuades the people with him to consent

* Ῥωμαῖοι τάς τε ἰσχαλεὼς τοῦ ἄστεως ἐνέπρησαν, καὶ τὰ τείχη καθίσκαψαν. Ibid.
† Cap. x. ibid. ‡ L. 7. cap. i. § 1.
§ Ἄλλον ἄπαυλα τῆς πόλεως τειρήσαν οὕτως ἐξωμάλισαν οἱ καθαιρέντες.—κ. λ. ib.
‖ L. 7. cap. v. § 2. p. 412. Hav. Et conf. l. 6. cap. ix. § 4.

to be put to death, has these expressions. "Where * is now that "great city; the metropolis of the whole Jewish nation? . . . Where "is that city, which we believed to have God inhabiting in it? It † "is rooted up to the foundation, and has no other monument left, "but the army of those who have destroyed it, encamping upon it's "ruins. . . Who can consider these things, and not be sorry, that "he is still alive? I cannot but wish, that we had all died, before "we had seen the holy city overthrown by it's enemies, and ‡ the "holy temple so profanely dug up to the foundation."

And Whitby in his notes upon Matt. xxiv. 2. says: "The Jewish "Talmud and Maimonides add, that Turnus [i. e. Terentius Rufus] "captain of the army of Titus, did with a plow-share tear up the "foundations of the temple, and thereby signally fulfill those words "in Micah iii. 12. Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be plowed as "a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the "house as the high places of the forest."

Grotius has well observed upon Matt. xxiv. 1. "that the temple, "which had been repaired, or rebuilt by Herod, was rightly esteem-"ed to be the same temple that had been built by Zorubabel. So "therefore Josephus says, that the temple had been twice destroyed, "once by the Chaldeans, a second time by Titus. And the Jewish "masters call the destruction made by Titus, the destruction of the "second temple. Whilst this temple stood, the Messiah was to be "expected, not only according to the prophecy of Daniel, but "likewise of Haggai, ch. ii. 8. and Malachi, ch. iii. 1.

"Cæsar § determined to leave there as a guard the tenth legion, "with some troops of horse and companies of foot. Having now "compleated the war, he returned thanks to his whole army, and "distributed rewards among them. For this purpose he had a large "tribunal erected for him in the place where he formerly encamped. "That was a work of three days.

"The ‖ rest of the army was sent away to several places. But "he permitted the tenth legion to stay as a guard upon Jerusalem. "Then he went to Cesarea by the sea-side, taking with him two "legions, the fifth and the fifteenth, to attend him, 'till he should "go to Egypt. At Cesarea he laid up the spoils in great quantities, "and gave orders that the captives should be kept there."

"From ** that Cesarea Titus went to Cesarea Philippi, where he "stayed some while, and exhibited all sorts of shews. Here many "of the captives were destroyed. Some were thrown to wild-beasts. "Others, in great numbers, were compelled to fight with each other. "Whilst he was there, he heard of the seizure of Simon son of Gio-"ras, who during the siege had commanded in the upper city, and "who had concealed himself under ground as long as he could. "But now fell into the hands of Terentius Rufus, who had been

* L. 7. cap. viii. § 7. p. 430. Hav.
† Περίῤῥιζος ἐκ βάθρων ἀνῄρπασται.—
‡ —περὶ τὸν ναὸν τὸν ἅγιον οὕτως ἀνοσίως ἐσκαμμένον. Ibid.
§ L. 7. cap. i. § 1. ‖ § 2. ** Cap. ii. § 1.

" left to keep guard at the ruins of Jeruſalem. When Titus was " returned to Ceſarea by the ſea-ſide, Simon was brought bound be- " fore him, who ordered him to be kept for the triumph at Rome.

" At * Ceſarea Titus ſolemnized the birth-day of his brother Do- " mitian, on † the 24th day of October, in a ſplendid manner, doing " honour to him in the puniſhment of the Jews. For the number " of thoſe who where now ſlain, in fighting with beaſts, or were " burnt to death, or fought with one another, exceeded two thou- " ſand and five hundred. Yet did all this ſeem to the Romans, " though they were deſtroyed ten thouſand ways, beneath their de- " ſerts. Afterwards Titus went to Berytus, a city in Phenicia, and " a Roman colony. There he ſtayed a longer time, and exhibited " a more pompous ſolemnity on his farther's birth-day [Nov. 17]. " Here a great number of the captives were deſtroyed in the like " manner as before.

" Having ‡ ſtayed ſome while at Berytus, he ſet forward to An- " tioch. And, as he went, exhibited magnificent ſhews in all the " cities of Syria, making uſe of the captives, as public inſtances of " the overthrow of the Jewiſh nation."

At § Antioch he was received with loud acclamations. Thence he went to Zeugma, which lies upon the Euphrates. Whither came to him meſſengers from Vologeſus, king of Parthia, who brought him a crown of gold, congratulating him upon his victory over the Jews, which he accepted. There he feaſted the king's meſſengers, and then returned to Antioch.

It does not appear, that Titus celebrated any ſhews there. And when the people of that place requeſted him to expell the Jews out of their city, he refuſed to comply with them, and confirmed to them all the privileges which they had hitherto enjoyed there.

Having ‖ ſent away the two before mentioned legions, by which he had been attended, one to Myſia, the other to Pannonia: and having given orders for ſending Simon and John, and ſeven hundred of the talleſt and handſomeſt of the captives, to appear in the triumph at Rome, he went to Alexandria, and thence to Rome. And paſſing through Paleſtine, in his way to Egypt, he was much moved, as Joſephus ſays, at the ſight of the deſolations of that country.

When ** Titus came near Rome, he was received with great rejoicings by the people, who came out to meet him, as alſo by his father Veſpaſian. And though the ſenate had decreed to them two ſeveral triumphs, they choſe to have but one. Joſephus has not informed us exactly concerning the time of it. And learned critics are now of different opinions. Some †† place it near the end of the month of April, in 71. Others ‡‡ argue, that it muſt have been later.

" Many §§ other ſpoils," ſays Joſephus, " were carried in great " abundance. But the moſt conſiderable of all were thoſe taken out of

* Cap. iii. § 1. † Vid. Pagi ann. 70. n. iii. et Baſnag. ann. 70 n. xviii.
‡ Cap. v. § 1. §§ 2. ‖ § 2, 3. ** § 3, 4.
†† Vid. Pagi ann. 70. n. vi. ‡‡ Baſnag. 71. n. iii. §§ § 5.

" the temple of Jeruſalem. There was the golden table, of many " talents. And the candleſtick, likewiſe of gold, with it's ſeven " lamps, a number much reſpected by the Jews, The laſt of all " the ſpoils was the law of the Jews. After which were carried " images of victory, made of gold, or ivory. After which came Veſ- " paſian firſt, on horſe-back, then Titus. Domitian alſo was there " ſplendidly attired, and riding upon a beautiful horſe.

" The * end of this pompous ſhew was at the temple of Jupiter " Capitolinus. When they came thither, they ſtood ſtill. For it " was the ancient cuſtom of the Romans, to ſtay, till word was " brought, that the general of the enemy was ſlain. This was Si- " mon the ſon of Gioras, who had been led in the triumph among " the captives. A rope was put about his neck, and he was led to a " proper place in the Forum, where malefactors were put to death. " When tidings of his death were brought, all the people ſet up the " ſhout of joy. And ſacrifices were offered up, with the accuſtomed " prayers. The emperor then went to his palace, and feaſtings " were made every where.

" And † now Veſpaſian determined to build a temple of Peace, " which was finiſhed in a ſhort time, and in a ſplendid manner. " Here he laid up thoſe golden veſſels and inſtruments, that were " taken out of the Jewiſh temple, as enſigns of his glory. But their " law, and the purple veils of the holy place, he ordered to be depo- " ſited in his palace.

" That ‡ temple was adorned with paintings and ſtatues. In it " were collected and repoſited all ſuch curioſities, as men are wont " to wander all over the world to obtain a ſight of."

The book of the law does not now appear in what is called the triumphal arch of Titus, though the table and the candleſtick are very viſible.

Joſephus, in his Life, ſays, that when the city was taken, Titus gave him leave to aſk what he pleaſed. One § of his requeſts was, to have the ſacred books, which were granted to him. Here, in the hiſtory of the war, he ſeems to ſay, they ‖ were depoſited in the emperor's palace. Poſſibly, they were placed there. But Joſephus was allowed to have the uſe of them when he deſired it.

The temple of peace, according to the deſcription which Joſephus has given of it, appears to have reſembled our Britiſh Muſeum, and other like rich cabinets of princes in ſeveral parts of Europe.

The temple of peace was burnt down in the reign of Commodus. But it is likely, that many of the curioſities depoſited in it were preſerved from the flames. And the Jewiſh ſpoils were in being in the fifth century, and afterwards, though not at Rome, as we learn from ** Adrian Reland.

* § 6. † § 7. ‡ Ib. § 7.

§ — τῶν βιβλίων ἱερῶν ἔλαβεν χαριστηρίου Τίτου. Vit. § 75.

‖ Τὸν δὲ νόμον αὐτῶν,—παρατεθεῖναι ἐν τοῖ, βασιλικοῖς ἀποθετοῖς φυλάττειν. L. 7. c. v. § 7.

** " Imperante Commodo deflagravit hoc templum Pacis, teſte Herodiano, L. 1. cap. 14. " ſed cum eo non periiſſe ſpolia Hieroſolymitana certum eſt, quoniam ſeculo quinto a " Chriſto nato eâ in Africam delata ſunt, ut mox videbimus, &c." Reland. De ſpoliis Templi Hieroſ. cap. 13. p. 133.

We

We have seen the overthrow of the city and temple of Jerusalem. But there still remained some strong places in Judea, not yet taken by the Romans. Of which Josephus has given an account. And it is fit we should trace him to the end of his history of the Jewish war. For, as our Lord said, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there "will the eagles be gathered together," Matt. xxiv. 28. And see Luke xxiv. 37.

Lucilius Bassus * was sent into Judea by Vespasian as Lieutenant, where he received a sufficient army from Cerealis Vitellianus. He soon took Herodian, and made the garison prisoners.

He † then determined to go to Machærus. By means of an accident, well improved, he became master of it, without much loss on either side.

"Having ‡ settled affairs there, he marched hastily to the forest "of Jardes. Where, as he was informed, many were gathered to- "gether, who during the siege had escaped from Jerusalem and Ma- "chærus. When they engaged, the battle was fierce and obstinate "on both sides. Nevertheless of the Romans there were not more "than twelve killed, and not many wounded. But of the Jews not "one escaped out of the battle; but they were all killed, being not "fewer in number than three thousand, and with them their gene- "ral, Judas, the son of Jairus, who had been captain of a band in "the siege of Jerusalem, and by getting out through a vault under "ground had privately escaped.

"About § this time the emperor sent orders to Lucilius Bassus "and Liberius Maximus, that all Judea should be exposed to sale. For "he founded not any city there, but reserved the country to him- "self. However, he assigned a place for eight hundred men, whom "he dismissed from the army, which he gave them for their habita- "tion. It is called Ammaus, and is distant from Jerusalem sixty "furlongs. He also laid a tribute upon the Jews wherever they were, "requiring that every one of them should bring two drachmas "[half a shekel] every year to the capitol, the same they had been "used to pay to the temple at Jerusalem."

Bassus || having died in Judea, Flavius Silva was sent to succeed him in the government of that country. Who soon made an expedition against Massada, the only remaining fortress. It was in the possession of Eleazar, a commander of the Sicarii. He was a descendant of Judas, who had persuaded many of the Jews, as formerly related, not to submit to the assessment by Cyrenius, when he came into Judea after the removal of Archelaus.

When ** there was no room left for escaping, Eleazar called together the principal persons, and consulted with them what might be best to be done. At which time he made an oration to them, to induce them to kill themselves, rather than to fall into the hands of the Romans.

* L. 7. cap. vi. 1. † Ib. § 1—4. ‡ Ib. § 5.
|| § 6. § Cap. viii. § 1. ** § 6.

That * oration had great effect upon many. Some however there were, who hesitated. He therefore went on, and made another oration to the like purpose. All now were persuaded.

"They † then chose ten men of the number by lot, to slay all the "rest. When these ten men had without fear slain all the rest, men, "women, and children, as determined, they cast lots upon them-"selves. And he who had the first lot killed the other nine, and "then himself. These people so died, with the intention, that they "might not leave so much as one man among them to be subject "to the Romans. However, there was one ancient woman, and "another woman, related to Eleazar, who exceeded most women "in knowledge and prudence, and five children, who had hid them-"selves in a cavern under ground. They had carried water with "them for their drink, and lay quiet there, whilst the rest were in-"tent upon the slaughter of each other. The whole number of "these people, including the just-mentioned women and children, "was nine hundred and sixty. This slaughter was made on the "fifteenth day of the month of April in the year 73, as may be "computed."

When the Romans entered the place the next morning, their surprize was very great, as may be well supposed,

Soon ‡ after this, some turbulent Jews were the occasion of disturbances at Alexandria, where six hundred were slain, and after that in Cyrene, where more than three thousand suffered. The disturbance there was occasioned by the imposture of Jonathan, a weaver, who § persuaded many people of the meaner sort to follow him into the wilderness, where he promised to shew them signs and wonders. Moreover Vespasian sent express orders, that the Jewish temple of Onias, as it was called, built in the prefecture of Heliopolis in Egypt, should be demolished. Which was done in the year of Christ 74, about two hundred and twenty-four years after it had been first built, as || Prideaux computes.

We before saw, what was the number of those who were computed to have perished in the siege of Jerusalem. "But taking in "also those who had suffered in other places out of Jerusalem, these, "added to the eleven hundred thousand that perished in the siege, "make the whole number thirteen hundred and thirty-seven "thousand four hundred and ninety, an innumerable company "still being omitted, that perished through famine, banishment, "and other ** miseries." Which I think to be no aggravation at all.

* Ib. § 7. † Cap. ix. § 1. 2. ‡ Cap. x. & xi.

§ — ἐκ ὀλίγης τῶν ἀπόρων ἠφείπετο τροσέχειν ἀυλῶ. ᾗ τερήγαγεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον σημεῖα τρομηθεὰ, δείξειν ὑποσχόμενος. Cap. xi. § 1.

|| See his Connexion, &c. year before Christ 149, p. 266.

** See Usher's Annals, p. 907, in English, Lond. 1653.

RE-

Reflections upon the preceding history.

IX. Let us now reflect.

1. All these things have we seen in Josephus, who, at the beginning of his works, says: "I * Josephus son of Matthias, by birth a "Hebrew of Jerusalem, and a Priest, who myself at first fought "against the Romans, and was afterwards forced to be present at "the things that were done, have writ this history."

The conclusion of the whole work, at the end of the seventh and last book of the Jewish War, is to this effect. "Here † we "put an end to our history, which we promised to deliver with "all accuracy to those who are desirous to know, how this war "of the Romans with the Jews was managed. Concerning the "style, let the readers judge. Concerning the truth, I may boldly "say, that only has been aimed at throughout the whole work."

Perhaps likewise it may not be amiss to observe what he says of this work in his first book against Appion, writ long afterwards, near the period of his life.

"As ‡ for myself, I have composed a true history of that war, "and of all the particulars that occurred therein: as having been "concerned in all it's transactions. For I acted as General among "those among us who are called Galileans, as long as it was pos-"sible for us to make any opposition. And when I was taken cap-"tive by the Romans, Vespasian and Titus had me kept under a "guard; but obliged me to attend them continually. At first I "was in bonds, afterwards I was set at liberty, and was sent to ac-"company Titus, when he came from Alexandria to the siege of "Jerusalem. During which time, nothing was done which escaped "my knowledge. What happened in the Roman camp I saw, and "wrote it down carefully. What information the deserters brought "out of the city, I was the only man that understood it. After-"wards I got leisure at Rome. And when all my materials were "prepared, I procured the help of one to assist me in writing Greek. "Thus I composed the history of those transactions. And I was so "well assured of the truth of what I related, that I first appealed to "those who had the supreme command in that war, Vespasian and "Titus, as witnesses for me. For to them I first presented those "books, and after them to many of the Romans, who had been in "the war. I also communicated them to many of our own men "who understood the Greek philosophy: among whom were Ju-"lius Archelaus, and Herod, a person of great gravity, and King "Agrippa himself, who deserved the greatest admiration. All these "bore testimony to me, that I had the strictest regard to truth. "Who would not have dissembled the matter, nor have been silent, "if through ignorance, or out of favour to either side I had altered, "or omitted any thing."

* De B. Jud. in Pr. § 1. † L. 7. cap. xi. § 3. ‡ Contr. Ap. l. i. § 9.

2. Josephus's

2. Joſephus's hiſtory of the Jewiſh War is an ample teſtimony to the fullfilment of all the predictions of our Lord concerning the demolition of the temple and city of Jeruſalem, and the miſeries to be endured by the nation during the ſiege, which were ſuch as had never before happened to any people, nor were likely to happen again.

3. The ſufferers in theſe calamities were, generally, men of the worſt characters, Robbers and Sicarii, and others too much reſembling them. It is reaſonable to believe, that no Chriſtians were then ſhut up in the city, nor many other good men, to partake in the miſeries of that long and grievous ſiege. As St. Peter ſays, having inſtanced in the preſervation of Noah the eighth perſon, "when God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, "and then delivering juſt Lot, when the cities of Sodom and Go-"morrhah were turned into aſhes," adds, with a view to other like caſes, and probably to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem itſelf, "The Lord "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to re-"ſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgement to be puniſhed." 2 Pet. ii. 5—9.

4. I think it ought to be obſerved by us, that there was not now any peſtilence at Jeruſalem, but the Jews periſhed by the calamities of war. It might have been expected, that the bad food, which they were forced to make uſe of in the ſtreightneſs of the ſiege, and the noiſome ſmell of ſo many dead bodies, lying in heaps, in the city itſelf, and in the valleys or ditches without the walls, ſhould have produced a plague. But nothing of that kind appears * in the hiſtory, which muſt have been owing to the ſpecial interpoſition of Divine Providence. Joſephus † in ſome of the places, where he ſpeaks of the putrefaction of the dead bodies, may uſe expreſſions equivalent to peſtilential. But he never ſhews, that there was an infection. If there had, it would have equally affected the Romans and the Jews, and the ſiege of the place muſt have been broke up, and the Romans would have gone off as faſt as they could.

5. None can forbear to obſerve the time when all theſe things came to paſs. Our Lord ſays, Matt. xxiii. 36. "Verily, I ſay unto "you, all theſe things ſhall come upon this generation." And xxiv. 34, "Verily I ſay unto you: This generation ſhall not paſs, till all "theſe things ſhall be fulfilled." So likewiſe Mark xiii. 30. and Luke xi. 32. So it was. All theſe things foretold by our Lord came to paſs, before the end of that generation of men. Jeruſalem and the temple were no more, before the end of the year 70, of the Chriſtian epoch, and within forty years after his crucifixion.

Concerning the time alſo our Lord ſaid: "And this Goſpel of the

* "Il eſt difficile que tant de peuples renfermez dans une ville durant les chaleurs de l'été, "de ſi mechants nourritures, et ſurtout la puanteur de tant de corps morts, n'aient joint la "peſte à la famine. Joſeph n'en parle neanmoins qu'en un endroit, en paſſant. Ce qui mar-"que qu'elle ne fut pas conſiderable." Till. Ruine des Juifs, art. 67. p. 960.

† Vid. De B. Jud. l. 5. cap. xii. § 4.

"kingdom

"kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world, for a witneſs to all "nations." Matt. xxiv. 14. Compare Mark xiii. 10.

This we know from Chriſtian writings, particularly the books of the New Teſtament, moſt of which were writ before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. They bear witneſs, that the Goſpel had been preached to Jews and Gentiles, in Judea, Syria, Aſia, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, and other places, and with great ſucceſs. And the preaching of the goſpel throughout the world was a teſtimony to all nations, that the calamities inflicted upon the Jewiſh people were juſt and fit. They bear witneſs, that the Jewiſh nation had been called upon to repent, and were faithfully, and affectionately, and earneſtly warned and admoniſhed; but they refuſed to hearken. See the Acts of the Apoſtles, and Mark xvi. 20. Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6. and 23.

Says Archbiſhop Tillotſon: "We * have this matter related, not "by a Chriſtian (who might be ſuſpected of partiality, and a de- "ſign to have paralleled the event with our Saviour's prediction), "but by a Jew, both by nation and religion, who ſeems deſignedly "to have avoided, as much as poſſibly he could, the very mention "of the Chriſtian name, and all particulars relating to our Saviour, "though no hiſtorian was ever more punctual in other things."

Says Mr. Tillemont †: "God has been pleaſed to chooſe for our "information in this hiſtory, not an Apoſtle, nor any of the "chief men of the church, but an obſtinate Jew, whom neither "the view of the virtue and miracles of the Chriſtians, nor the "knowledge of the Law, nor the ruin of his religion and country, "could induce to believe in and love the Meſſiah, who was all the "expectation of the nation. God has permitted it ſo to be, that the "teſtimony, which this hiſtorian gave to an event, of which he did "not comprehend the myſtery, might not be rejected, neither by "Jews nor Heathens, and that none might be able to ſay, that he "had altered the truth of things to favour Jeſus Chriſt and his diſ- "ciples.

Dr. W. Wotton ſays of Joſephus: "He ‡ is certainly an Author "very juſtly to be valued, notwithſtanding all his faults. His "'Hiſtory of the Jewiſh War' is a noble demonſtration of the truth "of the Chriſtian Religion, by ſhewing, in the moſt lively manner, "how the prophecies of our bleſſed Lord concerning the deſtruction "of Jeruſalem were literally fulfilled in their fulleſt extent."

And Dr. Doddridge, in his notes upon the xxivth chapter of St. Matthew's Goſpel, ſays: "Chriſtian § writers have always with great "reaſon repreſented 'Joſephus's Hiſtory of the Jewiſh War' as the "beſt commentary upon this chapter. And many have juſtly re- "marked it, as a wonderful inſtance of the care of Providence for "the Chriſtian Church, that he, an eye-witneſs, and in theſe things

* Vol. II. p. 563. ſerm. 186. the ſeventh ſermon upon 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

† Ruine des Juifs, art. i. p. 722.

‡ Preface to his Miſcellaneous Diſcourſes relating to the Traditions and Uſages of the Scribes and Phariſees, p. xlix. The faults, which he obſerves in Joſephus, may be ſeen at p. xxxiii, &c.

§ The Family Expoſitor, § 160. Vol. II. p. 373.

"of

" of ſo great credit, ſhould (eſpecially in ſo extraordinary a manner) " be preſerved, to tranſmit to us a collection of important facts, " which ſo exactly illuſtrate this noble prophecy, in almoſt every " particular circumſtance. But as it would ſwell my notes too much " to enter into a particular detail of thoſe circumſtances, I muſt con- " tent myſelf with referring to Dr. Whitby's excellent notes upon " the xxivth of Matthew, and to Archbiſhop Tillotſon's large and ac- " curate diſcourſe on the ſame ſubject, in the ſecond volume of his " poſtumous works, Serm. 183—187."

Iſidore of Peluſium, who flouriſhed about the year 412, in one of his epiſtles, has theſe expreſſions: " If * you have a mind to know " what puniſhment the wicked Jews underwent, who ill-treated the " Chriſt, read the hiſtory of their deſtruction, writ by Joſephus, a " Jew indeed, but a lover of truth, that you may ſee the wonderful " ſtory, ſuch as no time ever ſaw before ſince the beginning of the " world, nor ever ſhall be. For that none might refuſe to give credit " to the hiſtory of their incredible and unparalleled ſufferings, truth " found out not a ſtranger, but a native, and a man fond of their in- " ſtitutions, to relate them, in a doleful ſtrain."

Euſebius often quotes Joſephus, and in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory has tranſcribed from him ſeveral articles at large. Having rehearſed from the Goſpels divers of our Lord's predictions of the evils then coming upon Jeruſalem, and the Jewiſh people, he adds: " Who- " ſoever † ſhall compare theſe words of our Saviour with the hiſtory " of the whole war, publiſhed by the above mentioned writer, muſt " admire our Lord's great wiſdom, and acknowledge that his foreſight " was divine."

In his Chronicle, as we have it from Jerome in Latin, Euſebius ſays: " In ‡ ſubduing Judea, and overthrowing Jeruſalem, Titus " ſlew ſix hundred thouſand people. But Joſephus writes, that ele- " ven hundred thouſand periſhed by famine and the ſword, and that " another hundred thouſand were publicly ſold, and carried captives. " And he ſays, that the occaſion of there being ſo great a multitude " of people at Jeruſalem was this, that it was the time of Paſſover. " For which reaſon, the Jews having come up from all parts to wor- " ſhip at the temple, they were ſhut up, in the city, as in a priſon. " And indeed, it was fit they ſhould be ſlain at the ſame time, in " which they crucified our Saviour."

It is certainly very fit, that Chriſtians ſhould attend to the fulfill- ment of our Lord's predictions relating to the Jewiſh people: which are ſo frequent, ſo ſolemn, and affectionate. The teſtimony of Joſe- phus is the moſt conſiderable of all. It is the moſt full, and parti-

* Lib. 4. ep. 75. vid. et ep. 74.

† H. E. l. 3. cap. 8. p. 81. D.

‡ " Titus Judæâ captâ, et Jeroſolymis ſubverſis, DC millia virorum interfecit. Joſephus " vero ſcribit undecies centena millia fame et gladio periiſſe, et alia centum millia captivo- " rum publice venundata. Ut autem tanta multitudo Jeroſolymis reperirentur, cauſſam Azy- " morum fuiſſe refert: ob quam ex omni genere Judæi ad templum confluentes urbe quaſi " carcere ſunt recluſi. Oportuit enim in iiſdem diebus eos interfici, in quibus Salvatorem " crucifixerant." Chron. p. 162.

cular,

cular, and exact of any we have, or have the knowledge of. And he was an eye-witneſs. And he was manifeſtly zealous for the honour of his country. He had a great reſpect for the temple and it's worſhip, and for all the peculiarities of the Moſaic law. And he continued to have the ſame to the laſt, as appears from his own life, and his books againſt Apion.

OTHER ANCIENT WRITERS BEARING WITNESS TO THE SAME EVENTS.

X. Joſephus, in the preface to his own work, intimates, that ſome hiſtories of the war had been before written by others. But he repreſents them as partial, and defective, and compoſed by men, who were not well informed. Undoubtedly none of theſe remain now. They have been loſt long ſince.

Juſtus of Tiberias, contemporary with Joſephus, between whom there were many differences, alſo wrote a hiſtory of the war. Joſephus, in his Life, chargeth him with falſhood, and blames him for not publiſhing his work until after the death of Veſpaſian and Titus and King Agrippa. Joſephus owns * that Juſtus was well ſkilled in Greek learning. And he plainly ſays, that he wrote of the war.

I do not clearly perceive Euſebius † to have known any thing of Juſtus, but what he learned from the teſtimonies of Joſephus above referred to by me.

Juſtus ‡ is in Jerome's catalogue of Eccleſiaſtical writers. He ſeems to aſcribe to him two books.

Photius §, I think, ſpeaks of but one work of this author, which he calls a Chronicle. He ſays, it began with Moſes, and ended at the death of Agrippa. He alſo takes notice of Joſephus's cenſures both of the author himſelf and his work.

Stephanus Byzantinus, in his article of Tiberias, ſays: "Of "this city was Juſtus, who wrote of the Jewiſh War in the time of "Veſpaſian ‖."

Diogenes Laertius **, in his Life of Socrates, quotes a paſſage from Juſtus of Tiberias; and ſeems to quote the ſame book that was read by Photius.

Several learned moderns †† are of opinion, that Juſtus, like Joſephus, wrote two books, one of the Jewiſh War, another of the

* Καὶ γὰρ δὴ ἄπειρος ἦν παιδείας τῆς παρ' Ἕλλησιν, ἡ δ' ἄλλων ἐπεχείρησεν ἁψ τὴν ἱστορίαν τῶν πραγμάτων τούτων ἀναγράφων. κ. λ. Joſeph. Vit. § 9. Vid. et § 65.

† H. E. l. 3. cap. x. p. 86. B.

‡ "Juſtus Tiberienſis de provincia Galilæa, conatus eſt ipſe Judaicarum rerum hiſtoriam texere, et quoſdam commentariolos de Scripturis componere:" &c. De V. I. cap. 14.

§ Ἀνεγνώσθη Ἰούστου Τιβεριέως χρόνικον. κ. λ. Cod. 33. p. 20.

‖ Ἐκ ταύτης ἦν Ἰοῦστος, ὁ τὸν Ἰουδαϊκὸν πόλεμον τὸν κατὰ Οὐεσπασιανὸν ἱστορήσας. Steph. Byz.

** Φησὶν Ἰοῦστος ὁ Τιβεριεὺς ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ. Diog. La. l. 2. § 41.

†† "Unde colligo (ex Hieronymi Catalogo), ut Joſephus, ita et Juſtum, non modo de "Antiquitatibus Judaicis, ſed ſeorſum etiam de Bello Judaico ſcripſiſſe." Voſſ. de H. Gr. Vid. et Valeſ. An. in Euſeb. l. 3. cap. x. Tillem. Ruine de Juifs, art. 82.

Jewiſh

Jewiſh Antiquities. Menage *, in his notes upon Diogenes Laertius, aſcribes to Juſtus three books, that is, Memoirs, beſide the two before mentioned. I rather think, there was but one: and that what Juſtus wrote of the war was compriſed in the Chronicle. Menage's argument from Suidas is of no value. For Suidas expreſſeth himſelf inaccurately. Nor does he mention more than two works. The Memoirs, ὑπομνήματα, are the ſame with Jerome's "Commentarioli de Scripturis." Indeed, Suidas only tranſcribes Jerome, or his interpreter Sophronius, and has done it inaccurately.

Some † learned men lament the loſs of this work. Others ‡ think it was of little value. I cannot but wiſh, that the work, which was in being in the time of Photius, had alſo reached us. It muſt have been of ſome uſe. Perhaps the cenſure paſſed upon it by Joſephus, who was in great credit, has been a prejudice to it.

I have allowed myſelf to enlarge in my notice of this writer, who lived at the time, and was an actor in the Jewiſh war with the Romans. Though his work is not extant, he is a witneſs to that important tranſaction.

Pauſanias, who § lived in the ſecond century, and wrote after the year of our Lord 180, ſpeaks ‖ of a monument of queen Helena at Jeruſalem, which (city) an emperor of the Romans had deſtroyed to the foundation.

"Minucius Felix refers ** the Heathen people, not only to Joſephus, but alſo to Antonie Julian, a Roman author, from whom "they might learn, that the Jews had not been ruined, nor abandoned of God, till they had firſt abandoned him: and that their "preſent low condition was owing to their wickedneſs, and obſtinacy therein, and that nothing had happened to them but what "had been foretold."

Who that Julian was, cannot be ſaid. There have been ſeveral of that name, one †† of whom was Procurator of Judea, and was preſent with Titus at the ſiege of Jeruſalem, as we know from Joſephus. Tillemont ſays, that ‡‡ poſſibly he wrote a hiſtory of the ſiege of Je-

* "Scripſit ille Hiſtoriam Judaicam, eodem tempore quo Joſephus, a quo mendacii arguitur. Scripſit præterea ὑπομνήματα, quorum meminit Suidas. Scripſit et Chronicon Regum Judæorum, qui coronati fuere: Ut eſt apud Photium. Quod opus ſignat hic Laertius." Menag. in loc. p. 94.

† "Joſephus, in Vitâ ſuâ, et alibi, quaſi parum fido ſcriptori convitiatur. Sed de inimico, non magis ei crediderim, quam Juſto de Joſepho crederem, ſi hiſtoria ejus exſtaret, atque in ea æmulo ab eo detractum viderem. Utinam vero, quæcumque fuerit, ad nos uſque perveniſſet." Cleric. H. E. A. C. C. cap. vii.

‡ Tillem. as above, art. 80. § See Tillem. L'Emp. Marc. Aurele, art. xxxii.

‖ Ἑρκάιος δὲ Ἑλένης γυναικὸς ἐπιχωρίας τάφος ἐςὶν ἐν πόλει Σολύμοις, ἣν ἐς ἔδαφος καθεῖλεν ὁ Ῥωμαίων βασιλεύς. Pauſan. l. 8. cap. 16, p. 633.

** "Scripta eorum relege. Vel ſi Romanis magis gaudes, ut tranſeamus veteres, Flavii Joſephi, vel Antonii Juliani, de Judæis require. Jam ſcies, nequitia ſuâ, hanc eos meruiſſe fortunam: nec quidquam accidiſſe, quod non ſit his, ſi in contumaciâ perſeverarent, ante prædictum. Ita prius eos deſeruiſſe comprehendes, quam eſſe deſertos: nec, ut impie loqueris, cum Deo ſuo eſſe captos, ſed a Deo, ut diſciplinæ transfugas deditos." Minuc. cap. 33. Conf. cap. 10.

†† Καὶ Μάρκος, Ἀιλίνιος, ὁ τῆς Ἰωδαίας ἐπίτροπος. Joſ. de B. J. l. 6. cap. iv. 3.

‡‡ Ruine des Juifs, art. 72.

ruſalem.

ruſalem. G. Voſſius *, upon the ground of this paſſage of Minucius', puts Antonie Julian among Latin hiſtorians, who had writ a hiſtory of the Jews.

Minucius reckons Joſephus among Roman writers. Dr. Davis ſuſpects it to be an interpolation, and aſſigns not improbable reaſons, in his notes upon the place.

Suetonius † has mentioned the occaſion of the war, the appointment of Veſpaſian to be general, his, and his ſon's triumph ‡ at Rome, and ſeveral other material things, which have been already obſerved, or will in time be obſerved by us from him.

What § Tacitus has writ upon this ſubject, ſo far as it remains, may be taken notice of hereafter.

Dion Caſſius ‖ is another witneſs, whoſe teſtimony alſo may be taken more at a large hereafter.

Philoſtratus ſays, "that ** when Titus had taken Jeruſalem, and "filled all about it with dead bodies, and the neighbouring na- "tions offered him crowns, he ſaid, he was not worthy of ſuch an "honour, nor had he himſelf, he ſaid, done that great work. He "had only lent his hand to the ſervice of God, when he was "pleaſed to ſhew his diſpleaſure." Philoſtratus ſays, that Apollonius was much pleaſed with that token of wiſdom and humanity. He likewiſe ſays, that Apollonius wrote a letter to Titus, and ſent it by Damis, to this purpoſe. "Apollonius ſendeth greet- "ing to Titus emperor of the Romans. Since you refuſe to "be applauded for blood-ſhed and victory in war, I ſend you "the crown of moderation. You know, for what things crowns "are due."

Hence divers learned men have argued, that Titus refuſed to be crowned for his victory over the Jews. Baſnage †† and other learned men on the contrary are of opinion, that we may rely upon the authority of Joſephus, who tells us, "that he went from Antioch to "the Zeugma, whither came to him meſſengers from Vologeſus "king of Parthia, and brought him a crown of gold, upon the vic- "tory obtained by him over the Jews: which he accepted of, and "feaſted the king's meſſengers, and then returned to Antioch." "Moreover he accepted of a triumph for his victory over the Jews, "and all other honours cuſtomary upon the like occaſions. Neverthe- leſs Olearius, in his notes upon the place, argues, that ‡‡ Philoſtratus needs

* "Antonius Julianus Judaicam videtur hiſtoriam conſignaſſe, &c." De Hiſt. Lat. l. 3. De Hiſtoricis incertæ ætatis.

† Sueton. Veſpaſ. cap. 4, 5.

‡ "—— ac triumphum utriuſque Judaicum. equo albo comitatus eſt." Domit. cap. 2.

§ Vid. Tac. Hiſt. Lib. v. ‖ Dio, l. 66. ſub in.

** Ἐπεὶ δὲ Τίτος ἠρήκει τὰ Σόλυμα, καὶ νεκρῶν πλέα ἦν πάντα, τά τε ὁμορᾶ τε ἐθνῶν ἐςε φάνειν αὐτόν. Ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἠξίει ἑαυτὸν τούτου μὴ γὰρ αὐτὸν ταῦτα εἰργάσθαι, θεῷ δὲ ὀργὴν φήναι ἐπιδεδωκέναι τὰς ἑαυτῶν χεῖρας. κ. λ. Philoſ. de Vit. Apol. l. 6. cap. 29.

†† "Modeſtiam Titi laudibus effert Baronius, quod oblatâ ſibi coronâ aureâ à provinciis, "noluit coronari, teſtatus ſe prorſus indignum. Uſſerius, aliique eruditi, illud et ipſum "tradunt, freti auctoritate Philoſtrari."——Baſnag. Ann. 70. n. xvi.

‡‡ "Quem tamen Joſephi locum immerito Philoſtrato opponi putem.——Neque enim "Philoſtratus repudiaſſe coronam Titum ait, atque eâ non acceptâ legatos dimiſiſſe, "quod

needs not to be underſtood to ſay, that Titus refuſed the crowns offered him, but only ſaid, that he was unworthy of that honour, he having been only an inſtrument in the hand of God for diſplaying his juſt vengeance againſt guilty men.

And it muſt be owned, that Olearius expreſſeth himſelf with great judgement and moderation. Either way, thoſe learned men are to be reckoned miſtaken, who have maintained that Titus refuſed to be crowned for his victory over the Jews.

However, we are ſtill to reckon Philoſtratus, at the begining of the third century, a good witneſs to the overthrow of Jeruſalem by Titus.

Theſe are early Heathen authors, who have related the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and thereby borne teſtimony to the accompliſhment of our Lord's predictions concerning it.

Nor can any forget the triumphal arch of Titus, ſtill ſtanding at Rome, of which we before took notice.

There is alſo an ancient inſcription to the honour of Titus*, "who by his father's directions and counſels had ſubdued the Jewiſh "nation and deſtroyed Jeruſalem, which had never been deſtroyed "by any princes, or people before."

Which has occaſioned ſome learned men to ſay, that even inſcriptions are not free from flattery. But then it muſt be owned, that the genuineneſs and antiquity of this inſcription have been called in queſtion †. And there are ſome reaſons to doubt, whether this comes from the ſenate of Rome itſelf, as is pretended.

"quod viro docto interpretes perſuaſere, ſed hoc tantum, quod eo honore ſe indignum "dixerit: juſtitiæ Dei vindicatricis inſtrumentum, cujus nullæ fuerint in iſtis patrandis "propriæ vires, ſeſe exſtitiſſe agnoſcens, &c." Olear. in loc.

* Imp. Tito. Cæſari. Divi. Veſpaſiani. F.
Veſpaſiano. Aug. Pontifici. Maximo
Trib. Pot. x. Imp. xvii. Coſ. viii. P. P.
Principi. ſuo. S. P. Q. R.
Quod. Præceptis. Patris. Conſiliiſque. et
Auſpiciis. Gentem. Judæorum. Domuit. Et.
Urbem. Hieroſolymam. Omnibus. Ante. Se
Ducibus. Regibus. Gentibuſque. aut. Fuſtra
Petitam. aut. omnino. Intentatam. Delevit.

Ap. Gruter. p. 244.

† "Ubi fixerit, ignoratur. Scaliger vult ab Onufrio fictum." Ap. Gruter. Ib.

CON-

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD TO CHRISTIANITY.

IF the Gospels were forgeries, it is natural to suppose, some of the actions therein recorded would be unbecoming the character and circumstances of the persons to whom they are ascribed. The truth is, this sort of censure has actually been passed upon a few of the things performed by Jesus, by his disciples, and by his enemies. Indeed the boldness with which particular actions have been thus condemned, looks as if they were really blameable; yet, upon examination, it appears that there is not any just foundation for cavil here. In the relation which the Evangelists have given of our Lord's actions, they have maintained the nicest propriety. He has done nothing below his dignity as the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. The conduct of his disciples and of his enemies is equally in character; being exactly such as might be expected from persons of their dispositions.——In this, therefore, as in all other respects, the Gospels are sufficiently probable, yea carry a high degree of evidence in their own bosom. But, that the reader may judge for himself, I propose to examine matters minutely; beginning with the ordinary actions of our Lord's life, which have been blamed by the enemies of revelation, as unworthy of the high character ascribed to him in the Gospels.

SECT. I.

Shewing that all the ordinary actions of our Lord's life, were perfectly suitable to his character and undertaking.

OUR Lord's ordinary actions are such as follow. During the years of his childhood and youth, he remained with his parents, being in subjection to them, and working with his father at his occupation.——When he entered on his public life, he went about doing good to the bodies and to the souls of men. He minded no private concern of his own, being wholly employed in the duties of his ministry.——He therefore did not live in worldly pomp or splendor, but in continual hardships and mortifications; being supported

by the charity of his friends.——In all this he plainly acted agreeably to his character and function. Nor, in fact, have our adverſaries found any fault with his general conduct. What reproaches have been thrown out, are levelled againſt a few actions, which may be eaſily defended, being reaſonable and decent in the higheſt degree.

1. His behaviour towards his parents has been cenſured as not ſufficiently reſpectful. And the following inſtances are mentioned. His ſtaying behind them in Jeruſalem without their knowlege, when at the age of twelve years they carried up him to the paſſover. The anſwer which he gave to his mother at the marriage in Cana, when ſhe informed him that the wine was run ſhort. And what he ſaid of his mother and brethren, to one who told him, that they ſtood without deſiring to ſpeak with him.——As to our Lord's "tarrying in Jeruſalem after his parents were gone," though his mother blamed him for it, becauſe of the pain which it had given them, it was no ſort of diſobedience. They had not ordered their ſon to come away. Having parted with them by accident, perhaps on the day they propoſed to ſet out, they thought he had gone away with ſome of their kinsfolk. And in this perſuaſion they departed without making any ſearch for him. The fault, therefore, if there was any here, lay in themſelves. His parents having thus left him, Jeſus propoſed to ſpend his time profitably till they ſhould return. He preſented himſelf to the doctors, who in the chambers of the temple inſtructed ſuch young ones as had been brought up by their parents to the feaſt. And when it came to his turn, by aſking the doctors certain queſtions in the courſe of the exerciſe, he modeſtly inſinuated to them a correction of the errors they were guilty of in teaching. Thus he gave the people a ſpecimen, by way of prelude, of what he was more fully to perform afterwards in the courſe of his miniſtry. If his parents had duly conſidered what the angel formerly told them concerning the dignity of their ſon, they might have expected ſome ſuch extraordinary tranſaction during his firſt attendance in his father's houſe. At leaſt, when they found him ſo employed, inſtead of finding fault, they ought with reverence to have beheld thoſe firſt manifeſtations of his divinity. Wherefore the anſwer which he returned to his mother's complaint, is a ſufficient vindication of his conduct in this matter. Luke ii. 49. "And "he ſaid unto them, how is it that ye ſought me?" viz. on the road, that was an improper place. "Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my "father's buſineſs?" or, as others tranſlate it, "in my Father's houſe." You ought, therefore, to have ſought me in the temple.——What Jeſus ſaid to his mother at the marriage of Cana, was by no means diſreſpectful. John ii. 4. "Woman, what have I to do with thee, "mine hour is not yet come." In our language indeed, the compellation of woman ſounds harſh, being a term of diſreſpect. But it was by no means ſo among the Eaſterns, who made uſe of it in addreſſing perſons of the firſt quality, as all know who are acquainted with the Grecian writings. Our Lord, therefore, is very ignorantly found

found fault with on this account; especially as he is well known to have addressed his mother by the appellation of Woman, at a time when he meant to shew her the highest and tenderest regard, by recommending her from the cross to the care of the beloved disciple. John xix. 26. "Woman, behold thy son." To proceed, the sentence read interrogatively will easily run thus: "Woman, what have "I to do with thee? is not mine hour come?" is not the season of my public ministry commenced, in which I am to be no longer under the direction of my parents; but must work miracles, when I myself and not you judge it proper?——The answer which he gave to the people in Capernaum, who told him that his mother and brethren desired to speak with him, does not imply the least contempt of the natural relations established by God among mankind in general, nor any want of affection to his mother and brethren in particular; on the contrary, it imports the highest regard to both. Matth. xii. 49. "Who is my mother and brethren?" Who do you think are the objects of my tenderest regard? "And he stretched "forth his hands towards his disciples, and said; Behold my mother and "my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my father which "is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." They who do the will of God are beloved by me with a tenderness equal to that which I bear to my brother, my sister, and my mother. A declaration of this kind is so far from throwing contempt in general on the relations established between mankind by nature, or on Christ's mother and brethren in particular, that it implies these relations to be objects of the strongest and tenderest affections in the human nature; and that he had the highest respect and love for his own relations in particular.

2. The manner in which Jesus reformed the abuses committed in the temple is found fault with. We are told that his driving out, with a scourge of small cords, not only the cattle and those who sold them, but the money-changers also, and the people; his overturning the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them who sold doves; and his scattering the changers money; were outrageous actions, more becoming the furious zeal of an enthusiast, than that command of temper and sobriety which Jesus is said to have possessed.——But to understand this part of our Lord's conduct, we must remember, that in the action itself he called himself "the Son "of him to whom the temple belonged," John ii. 16. "And he said "unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence, and make not my "father's house, a house of merchandize." Wherefore, as on this occasion he expressly affirmed that he was the Son of God, his right to reform the abuses of the temple, the house of God, was unquestionable. Nor can any fault be found with the manner of the reformation, considering the authority of the person who made it. He acted plainly as master of the house. And though he was unsupported, the terror which he singly impressed upon the minds of the men, by the air of his countenance and the tone of his voice, was so great, that none of them made any resistance. The whip of

cords was designed not for the men, whom he never could have intimidated by the exertion of bodily force, but for the beasts, which were at market in the temple, and which could no otherwise be driven out. Wherefore, the whole of this transaction was perfectly suitable to our Lord's dignity as the Son of God; and the rather that, in so far as it regarded the men, there was here an exertion of his miraculous power, very proper at the beginning of his ministry. Accordingly, the Jews neither found fault with the action itself, nor with the manner of it: they only desired him to prove that he was the person he pretended to be. ver 18. "What sign "sheweth thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things?" Besides, among the Jews, it was common for prophets, by their own authority, to reform such abuses as were introduced into the worship of God, and to punish with their own hands, upon the spot, gross violations of the law: witness the action of Phinehas, by which he staid the plague, and which (Ps. cvi. 30.) "was accounted to him "for righteousness to all generations for ever more." The profanations of the temple which Jesus reproved were the most horrid abuses imaginable. The priests for gain allowed a fair to be kept in the outer court, whereby the Gentile proselytes were excluded from the place of worship allotted them. Or if any room was left them, they could not but be exceedingly disturbed in their devotions, by the noise ond hurry of the market. Add to this, that great frauds were committed in the bargains transacted here, by which the court of the temple, which had been assigned to the Gentiles as a house of prayer, was made a den of thieves. No wonder, therefore, that Jesus expressed the utmost indignation against the transgressors, and used some violence in expelling them. The men he intimidated by his miraculous power; the cattle he drave out with the scourge he had made; the implements of their illicit trade he overturned; and the things which he could not himself remove, he ordered to be taken away. In all this he acted agreeably to the character which he sustained. His zeal was no greater than what prophets far inferior to him had shewed; and the severity which he used was no greater than the crime deserved. Wherefore in every respect this part of our Lord's conduct was perfectly proper and consistent.

3. That Judas should have been of the number of the apostles, is thought inconsistent with the knowledge and wisdom ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels. This objection our Lord himself has taken notice of. He foresaw, that his honouring Judas with the apostleship, would be considered as a presumption, that he was ignorant of his real character. Wherefore, long before Judas discovered himself, Jesus foretold what he would do, to shew that he was fully acquainted with the character of the man. John vi. 70. "Have not I chosen "you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Wherefore, if any objection lies against the founder of Christianity for this choice, it cannot affect his foreknowledge, but must be levelled against his prudence. Yet in this part likewise, as in every other, he is perfectly free of blame.

blame. His making Judas an apoſtle is a ſhining inſtance of wiſdom. It was deſigned to be a demonſtration of our Lord's innocence. A man of profligate diſpoſitions, who he foreſaw would at the concluſion betray him, Jeſus chuſes into the college of the apoſtles. By the choice, this wicked perſon, who had not yet diſcovered himſelf, is appointed his maſter's conſtant attendant, and made the witneſs of the moſt ſecret actions; he is admitted into all the myſteries of his fellowſhip. Who does not in this ſee, that Jeſus was not afraid of the eyes of his enemies, however malicious? that his miracles were no juggling tricks, performed by compact with his diſciples? and that he was not carrying on any plot, to deceive the world? If Jeſus had been engaged in ſuch a deſign, muſt he not have foreſeen that Judas, when he betrayed him to the chief prieſts, would diſcover the whole fraud? The choice therefore which our Lord, with the fulleſt knowlege of Judas's character, made of him for an apoſtle, inſtead of being an inſtance of imprudence, was a proof of the moſt profound wiſdom. He thereby demonſtrated, in the cleareſt manner, his own moſt perfect innocence.—I have only to add, that in this view the wiſdom and propriety of the choice was ſo great, that it was foreordained to be from the beginning: and that notices thereof were given early in the Jewiſh prophecies, which deſcribed Meſſiah's life, ſufferings and death.

4. The freedom Jeſus uſed in "rebuking the Scribes and Phariſees," and the vehemence with which he denounced woes againſt them more than once, are thought inconſiſtent with the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition, and with the reſpect due to perſons of their rank. Nevertheleſs, if we conſider the matter in its juſt light, we ſhall ſoon be ſenſible that the ſeverity wherewith Jeſus treated this order of men, was by no means inconſiſtent with his general character, but was the neceſſary reſult of his wiſdom, and of his love to the reſt of mankind,. The Scribes and Phariſees were perſons remarkable for avarice, ſenſuality, pride, obſtinacy and contempt of real religion. Their corruption of heart exceeded all bounds. Gentle means would have made no impreſſion upon them. They needed the ſevereſt remedies.——Beſides, without regarding their reformation at all, which perhaps was not to be accompliſhed by any methods; conſidering the ſhew of worth which they aſſumed, and by which mankind were cheated into an high admiration of them, it was neceſſary, for the ſake of the people, to pull off the maſk of hypocriſy under which they had ſo long concealed their wickedneſs, and led the world aſtray. Luke xvi. 15. "Ye are they which juſtify yourſelves before men, but God knoweth your hearts: for "that which is highly eſteemed among men is abomination in the "ſight of God." Nor was there any other method to prevent the pernicious influence of their example and doctrine. This was the reaſon Jeſus rebuked them ſo openly, and denounced woes againſt them with ſuch vehemence. By ſo doing, he, whoſe judgement was by his miracles proved to be the judgement of a prophet, ſhewed his hearers every where what opinion he had of thoſe hypocrites:

and cautioned them in the moſt affecting manner, to beware both of them and of their doctrine. And though on theſe occaſions he expreſſed himſelf with more than ordinary vehemence, it muſt be owned that he preſerved an entire command of himſelf. For he uttered no ſentiment of expreſſion, but ſuch as the offences fully warranted, and the regard which he had for virtue abſolutely demanded.

5. Our Lord's riding into Jeruſalem on an aſs, amidſt the acclamations of his diſciples and the people, has been groſsly miſunderſtood, and ignorantly ridiculed by the adverſaries of religion. Hitherto Jeſus had aſſumed the title of Meſſiah, only in private, and among his diſciples. The reaſon was, if he had declared his intentions publicly in the beginning of his miniſtry, the rulers would have put him him to death before his work was finiſhed. It was neceſſary, however, both for the more certain information of mankind, who were not to be left to gueſs who he was, and for the credit of his own character, which was not to be doubtful or ambiguous, that he ſhould openly aſſume the dignity which really belonged to him. Wherefore, his miniſtry having continued the time determined, a few days before his death, he reſolved to receive the titles of Meſſiah, ſon of David, and king of Iſrael, publickly; though he knew it would become the foundation of that accuſation by which he was to be cut off.——This ſeaſon was of all others the moſt proper for his purpoſe. A great multitude now attended, in expectation that he was to ſet up his kingdom immediately. He knew that much people was coming from the city, to uſher him in with the pomp and ſtate of Meſſiah. Among the reſt, there were to be many Scribes and Phariſees, his enemies, before whom it was proper he ſhould acknowlege himſelf Meſſiah. Wherefore, he did not think of ſhunning the multitude as formerly; but determined to enter Jeruſalem amidſt the acclamations which he knew they would offer him as Meſſiah. And leſt, in the narrow paſſages and lanes leading into the city, he might have been hurt by the croud, he made his diſciples bring him an aſs to ride upon. Nor in this equipage was there any thing mean or ridiculous: aſſes being the beaſts commonly uſed by the Eaſterns, who ſeldom rode on horſes except they were perſons of the firſt rank. Hence, in the prophecy which foretold this event, it is mentioned as an inſtance of Meſſiah's humility, that when he ſhould make his public entry into Jeruſalem, he would ride, not upon an horſe after the manner of great kings and princes, but upon an aſs, becauſe "he was meek "and lowly."

6. The deſpondency which Jeſus ſhewed in the garden of Gethſemane at the approach of his trial and death, and the words which he uttered upon the croſs, are thought inconſiſtent with that patience and fortitude, which, as the Son of God, he ought to have poſſeſſed. But they can be ſo only, on ſuppoſition that his ſorrow and trouble in the garden, with his agony and bloody ſweat, proceeded from the fear of death. Nevertheleſs, the proſpect of death, though it was

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in him to be attended with every aggravating circumſtance of pain and ignominy, cannot be ſuppoſed to have raiſed any violent perturbation in one who on all occaſions ſhewed the greateſt firmneſs and courage, and whoſe virtue was of the moſt perfect kind. His followers, even of the weaker ſex, have many of them ſuffered much greater and longer bodily pains than he, not only without ſhrinking, but with triumph. Why then ſhould it be imagined, that the fear of crucifixion ſo far overcame Jeſus, as to put him into an agony, and make the blood iſſue through the pores of his body? A much more probable account of this matter is given by the Evangeliſts themſelves. They introduce Jeſus telling that he gave his life a ranſom for the ſins of many, and ſhed his blood for the remiſſion of ſin. Our Lord's perturbation and agony, therefore, aroſe from the pains which were inflicted on him by the hand of God, when he made his ſoul an offering for ſin *. In this view, his ſorrows were ſuch as no other perſon in this life ever felt. They aroſe from cauſes altogether ſingular, and from circumſtances peculiar to himſelf. Being of this ſort, they were no greater than the cauſe merited: and the expreſſions by which he uttered them are no argument of his puſillanimity or weakneſs. They were ſuitable to his feelings, and expreſſed them, as far as it was poſſible to make them known. For it was agreeabte to the counſels of God, and for the benefit of men, that the ſorrows which the Son of God felt in that hour ſhould be laid open to the view of the world.——The ſame account muſt be given of his anguiſh upon the croſs, when he cried out, "My God, "my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" if theſe words were an expreſſion of anguiſh, rather than a citation from Pſalm xxii. For whatever was the occaſion of this exclamation, it proceeded not from the pain of crucifixion. To make ſuch a ſuppoſition, is

* I know ſome imagine our Lord's diſtreſs in the garden aroſe from the more lively view, which he at that time had, of the miſeries of mankind, occaſioned by ſin. But the conſideration of theſe, however lively, could only raiſe ſympathy in the breaſt of Jeſus; where too it muſt have been greatly ſoftened by the certain proſpect which he then had of their deliverance, by what he had already done, and was ſtill to do for their recovery.

In the above account of our Lord's agony, I only affirm the fact, that it aroſe from the pains which were then inflicted upon him by the immediate hand of God. And I affirm it, becauſe in every page, the ſcriptures ſpeak of Jeſus as having ſuffered for the ſins of mankind; alſo becauſe it beſt accounts for his behaviour in the garden. To object to the fact, that we do not know how one who knew no ſin could ſuffer for ſin, is incompetent, becauſe it may be a matter above our comprehenſion. It deſerves however to be conſidered, whether Almighty God, who by means of ſecond cauſes conveys into our minds every ſenſation, whether of pleaſure or pain, may not by the direct operation of his power, without the intervention of any ſecond cauſes, convey perciſely the ſame ſenſations. If this is admitted, tho' Jeſus knew no ſin, God might, by the immediate operation of his power, make him feel thoſe pains which ſhall be the puniſhment of ſin hereafter, in order that by the viſible effects which they produced upon him, mankind might have a juſt notion of the greatneſs of theſe pains. In this no injuſtice was done to Jeſus. He freely conſented to ſuffer in this manner, becauſe it was for ſo great an end as the ſalvation of the human ſpecies. His bearing thoſe pains, with a view to ſhew how great they are, was by no means puniſhment. It was merely ſuffering. Theſe pains were not the effects of the divine anger; for at no time was God better pleaſed with his Son, than when he made his ſoul an offering for ſin. Laſtly; theſe pains did not ariſe from God's withdrawing his favour from his ſon. Of the divine favour, Jeſus in his ſufferings had the fulleſt conviction: as appears from the affectionate manner in which he then addreſſed God; "O MY FATHER, if it be poſſible, &c.——The above particulars merit attention, not as matters contained in revelation, but as an explanation of facts contained there, which ſome reaſoners reject, I ſuppoſe, becauſe they think a proper explication cannot be given of them.

to degrade the character of the founder of Chriſtianity, below that of many of his own diſciples, who have ſuffered greater pains than his, with the utmoſt fortitude.

Thus, after the ſevereſt ſearch into our Lord's conduct, it appears that none of the ordinary actions of his life can be cenſured with juſtice. To his parents he was ever dutiful. The abuſes in the temple he reformed with a zeal, ſimilar to that which the Jewiſh prophets in antient times had often ſhewn. His choice of Judas for an apoſtle did not betray any ignorance of the man's character: he did it to prove the purity of his own deſigns and actions. The ſtubborn incorrigibleneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, made it neceſſary that he ſhould denounce woes againſt them, that the people might be led to a juſt notion of their character. He rode into Jeruſalem on an aſs amidſt the acclamations of the people, to publiſh his claim to the dignity and character of Meſſiah. Withal, his ſorrow and affliction in the garden of Gethſemane, was perfectly conſiſtent with entire reſignation; while, at the ſame time, it ſhewed in the moſt lively colours the greatneſs of the pains which he then endured. In ſhort, his whole behaviour was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners; and therefore was perfectly ſuch as became the Son of God in the human nature.

SECT. II.

Shewing that miracles in general are poſſible, and that they are capable of proof.

1. THE oppoſers of revelation affect to treat miracles in general with contempt, as things in their own nature impoſſible. Hence, without any examination at all, they reject the Goſpels as utterly unworthy of credit, merely on account of the miracles which they contain.—But that miracles are things naturally poſſible, will appear from what follows. To uſe the definition which our adverſaries give of a miracle, it is a deviation from, or alteration of, the eſtabliſhed courſe of nature. Now that ſuch things may be, is perfectly agreeable to the notions mankind have of the operations of the Deity. The laws of nature, called by ſome immutable, are nothing, on the principles of Theiſm, but the rules whereby God directs himſelf in his operations throughout the mundane ſyſtem. Theſe laws he may alter at his pleaſure; unleſs we affirm, that the Deity is neceſſitated in his actions, and cannot ſuſpend the exertions of his power. Theſe doubtleſs are the ſentiments of Atheiſts. But all, who acknowlege the exiſtence of an Intelligent Mind the Creator of the Univerſe, believe him to be perfectly independent in his operations. Of conſequence, they find no difficulty in ſuppoſing that, as often as he pleaſes, he can differ from the ordinary methods which he has preſcribed to himſelf in the government of the univerſe. A miracle, therefore, is by no means a thing in its own nature impoſſible.——This reaſoning is confirmed by the perſuaſion, which has univerſally prevailed concerning miracles. For mankind are ſo far from having any general prejudices againſt ſuch things, that they have ever looked upon them as what might

might be expected. Accordingly the belief of miracles has prevailed ſo univerſally, even from the beginning, that there never was a nation which did not boaſt of prodigies, whether real or ſuppoſed. But a perſuaſion ſo general, could ſcarcely have found place in the breaſts of mankind, if the object of it had been a real impoſſibility.

2. Next we are told, that though the poſſibility of miracles ſhould be granted, they can never be rendered credible by human teſtimony. The perſon who ſees them, or is the ſubject of them, may believe them: but others, to whom he reports them, cannot conſiſtently with prudence receive them.——It is pretended, that the only reaſon why one man believes the teſtimony of another, is that the fact atteſted is agreeable to his own experiences. If therfore a man pertends to atteſt things altogether repugnant to the whole courſe of human experience, his atteſtation is to be rejected; becauſe the evidence ariſing from one's own experience muſt always preponderate that of another man's teſtimony, which is neither more nor leſs than that other's experience reported to us.——But this argument, however ſpecious, is at bottom both trifling and fallacious. For, in the firſt place, it will prove too much; namely, that the world had no beginning, the making of things out of nothing being contrary to all human experience, which teaches us, that the various races of animals are produced from parents, who in like manner had their exiſtence from thoſe of their kind who went before them. So invariable is this law, that not one inſtance can be produced of the creation of any ſubſtance whatever. And as the world may by this argument be demonſtrated to have had no beginning, ſo we may prove in like manner that it will have no end. For experience teaches, that all things continue exactly in the order wherein we found them, at our coming into the world. The revolutions of the heavenly bodies are the ſame: the changes produced in the face of nature by the ſeaſons, are the ſame; nay, there is not to be obſerved in the whole compaſs of nature, ſo much as a ſingle particle of matter annihilated, far leſs do we find any conſiderable portion of the ſyſtem deſtroyed. The creation therefore, and deſtruction of the world, being wholly out of the road of human experience, cannot be received as facts, on the authority of any atteſtation whatever. ——Farther, according to this method of arguing, no natural phænomenon can be rendered credible, if it happens to have no place in the country where the perſon lives, to whom it is propoſed as an object of belief. For inſtance, the exiſtence of ſnow and ice, being contrary to the experience of the inhabitants of certain climates, could not to them be rendered credible by the atteſtation even of whole nations with whom ſuch things are common.——To conclude: allowing this method of reaſoning to be juſt, many things will occur, in which a man ought not to truſt his own ſenſes. For ſeeing experience is the only meaſure of poſſibility, if our experiences concerning any matter are fewer on the one ſide than on the other, the fewer ought to yield to the greater. The wiſeſt men, however,

ever, often in practice contradict this maxim, believing many things firmly, though the experiences which support them are fewer in number than those which oppose them. Thus appeareth the absurdity of the rule of belief, which the oppofers of revelation are so anxious to establish, with a view to destroy the credit of the Gospel miracles. ——Secondly, the argument under consideration, turned against the Gospel miracles, does not proceed rightly on its own principles. For though it were really necessary, to render human testimony credible, that it be agreeable to the former experience of mankind, the miracles of Jesus and of his apostles would still be worthy of credit, notwithstanding no man, living at present ever beheld any thing like a miracle. I begin the proof of this point with observing, that the relations of things are very different from the laws of the material system. The latter, depending entirely on the will of God, may be changed; but the relations of things, resulting necessarily from their natures, are absolutely immutable. And therefore, while the Deity can easily make iron to swim on water, contrary to the laws of gravitation, he cannot make any part of a thing greater than the whole, nor a being perfectly true capable of falshood. These are plain impossibilities, beyond the reach even of the divine power, being direct contradictions. It follows, therefore, that if among men one invariably true could be found, his attestation of any matter within the compass of possibility, would deserve the highest credit: because reason teaches the absolute impossibility of such a person's falsifying. It must be owned, indeed, that perfection in truth is not to be had in the present corrupted state of our species. Nevertheless, reason and experience concur in assuring us, that human nature is capable of this moral quality to a very high degree; and that by how much the power of truth prevails in the mind of any person, by so much does the difficulty of that person's falsifying increase. The fact is, all men love truth, and practise it, unless they are diverted from it by some temptation falling in their way. They have likewise an high esteem of probity in others: and where they meet with it, they fail not to bestow the praise that is due to it. Few are without a strong natural sense of the baseness of a lie, even in matters most common. If the lie is told in a serious affair, where truth is most expected, it is detestable: If it relates to a subject of near concernment, and leads one into errors which prove fatal for life, it is monstrous. But if this falshood, so pernicious, is delivered in the name of God, and committed to writing, with a view to deceive thousands in after-times, to their ruin, without any the least advantage to the person who thus propagates the falshood, no words can paint its baseness; it is deviliſh, and altogether horrible. In short, cases and circumstances may easily be supposed, wherein, with the ordinary degree of veracity common to good men, it is next to impossible for them to falsify.——Besides, it ought to be remembered, that in the human heart there are many and strong supports of veracity, which render it morally impossible for him who is under their complicated influence to be guilty of deceit. For

inſtance, let us ſuppoſe the perſon, who bears teſtimony in the matters and circumſtances above mentioned is poſſeſſed of a great degree of benevolence towards mankind; this principle, it is plain, as well as his own honeſty, and the acknowleged importance of the matter, will place him at the utmoſt diſtance from deceiving others. Unto honeſty and benevolence, join the fear of God; and experience will declare, that the perſon who lives under the united power of theſe three, cannot poſſibly go about, in the name of the Deity, deceiving mankind into the belief of matters, which not only expoſe them every where to be maſſacred, but which muſt ruin them eternally: and all this without the leaſt advantage to himſelf. The truth is, ſo many virtues may enter into the compoſition of a human character, that though neither any one of them alone, nor all of them together, may make it ſtrictly impoſſible for the perſon who is poſſeſſed of them to be guilty of a ſingle lie, yet they may render him abſolutely incapable of a "long track or courſe of deliberate deceit," in matters of the higheſt importance. This impoſſibility, I think, the univerſal voice of human experience teaches: and with it the ſuggeſtions of reaſon agree; as it is an impoſſibility reſulting from the natures and relations of things,

I therefore infer, that when matters of fact, however extraordinary, are reported to have happened, if they are not impoſſible, if they are matters of great moment, on which the happineſs or miſery of multitudes depend: if they are in their nature things ſo obvious to ſenſe, that, in judging of them, the perſon who reports them could not be deceived; if they are atteſted by a great number of witneſſes, whoſe veracity, benevolence, and piety, are undoubted, whoſe relations are perfectly conſiſtent, and whoſe teſtimony is delivered with that calm aſſurance which is natural to truth; if theſe witneſſes had no manner of intereſt of their own, to promote by ſuch an atteſtation: laſt of all; if they proved the ſincerity with which they gave their teſtimony, by ſealing it with their blood: I ſay, in theſe circumſtances, an atteſtation of any poſſible matter, however extraordinary it may be, deſerves the higheſt credit, even upon the principles of belief contended for by modern infidels. Becauſe both reaſon and experience aſſure us, that it is morally impoſſible for ſuch perſons to falſify in ſuch a caſe, as it would imply a total ſuſpenſion of all the eſſential principles, by which the human mind is known to be conducted: conſequently their falſifying would be more miraculous a great deal, than any of the matters which they have related; and to refuſe them credit, would be to contradict the moſt frequent, the moſt important, and the moſt undoubted experiences of the human mind.——Thus it appears, that the objections which have been raiſed againſt miracles in general, by the adverſaries of revelation, with a view to deſtroy the credit of the Goſpel miracles in particular, are mere ſophiſms, and ought to be treated as ſuch by thoſe who deal candidly in this controverſy.

SECT. III.

SECT. III.

Shewing that no juſt objection can be urged againſt the particular miracles aſcribed to our Lord in the goſpels.

THE primary and general end of the miracles performed by the founder of the Chriſtian religion, was to confirm his miſſion. Conſidered in this view, they are all abundantly probable, being naturally adapted to ſhew that he acted by commiſſion from God. Moreover, in his miracles there was a greatneſs which plainly demonſtrated them to be the works of God. Nor do we find the leaſt circumſtance accompanying any of them, by which we can ſay it was diſparaged. The immediate ends likewiſe of the particular miracles mentioned in the Goſpels render them probable; for they were ſuch as became the Son of God. Jeſus never wrought any miracles lightly. No trifling purpoſes were accompliſhed by them. They were performed, to relieve mankind from the miſeries of life, or to beſtow upon them ſome ſignal bleſſing. In ſhort, all of them tended to good. Nor can any inſtance be mentioned, except two, where even by accident Chriſt's miracles proved in the leaſt hurtful. The withering of the barren fig-tree, and the deſtruction of the herd of ſwine in the country of the Gaderenes, are the miracles I have in view. Theſe, together with the many cures of Demoniacs, which are all thought incredible, becauſe no ſuch poſſeſſions of devils are obſerved now-a-days; and the turning of water into wine at the marriage in Cana, which is thought indecent, on account of the largeneſs of the quantity of wine that was produced; and the reſurrection of Lazarus, which is ridiculed, becauſe he is ſaid to have come forth bound hand and foot: are the only miracles which our adverſaries have pretended to find fault with, as inconſiſtent with our Lord's character and pretenſions.

1. With reſpect to the miracle of the fig-tree, it ought to be conſidered, that as the earth and the fulneſs thereof is the Lord's, it is his right to diſpoſe, not of the eſtates only, but of the lives of men. If ſo, we may as reaſonably find fault with the providence of God, becauſe he deſtroys mens goods by fire, and hail, and furious ſtorms, as object againſt the miracle of the fig-tree, or that of the Demoniacs, on account of the hurt done by them to individuals. The good produced by the natural evils which happen, has even been judged reaſon ſufficient for admitting them into the ſyſtem of the univerſe. In like manner the more valuable moral purpoſes, anſwered by the miracles objected againſt, ought to apologize for the place which they have in revelation; notwithſtanding, they occaſioned ſome loſs to individuals. Thus the withering of the fig-tree, being a ſenſible and affecting repreſentation of the puniſhment of moral unfruitfulneſs, under the beſt advantages poſſible, might have been of great uſe to the Jews, in awakening them to a ſenſe of their danger, from the impending judgements of God. Beſides, as this miracle was performed by Jeſus in the character of a prophet, it had a great and evident propriety; being ſimilar, though vaſtly ſuperior

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to the ſymbolical actions, whereby the Jewiſh prophets antiently foretold God's judgements upon rebellious nations. In ſuch repreſentations, both Jeſus and the prophets acted agreeably to the genius of the Eaſterns, with whom it was familiar to inſtruct their diſciples, by actions as well as by words. Farther, in moſt tranſlations of the Goſpels an unfavourable air has been given to this miracle, by a miſrepreſentation of one of its principal circumſtances. For, from the modern ſenſe of the word *curſe*, infidels have taken occaſion to repreſent Jeſus as ſtorming, raving, and uttering execrations againſt the tree; an indecency which nothing but the extravagance of paſſion could produce. Nevertheleſs, all that Jeſus ſaid to the tree was, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth." And the tree having withered from the root, in conſequence of this ſentence, the apoſtle Peter, who paſſed by next day and obſerved it, was ſtruck with wonder. "Maſter," ſaid he, "behold the fig-tree which thou curſed'ſt, is withered away." But, in the Hebrew language, to curſe the land or the trees is ſimply to make or pronounce them unfruitful. Thus Heb. vi. 8. "But "that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto "curſing, whoſe end is to be burned." The tree therefore which Jeſus curſed is no more but the tree which he had pronounced unfruitful. Laſtly, though it be ſaid, in our tranſlation, that, when Jeſus expected fruit from this tree, the time of figs was not yet; it does not follow, that his expectations were unreaſonable; or that the ſentence pronounced on the tree was unjuſt. "The time of figs," in ſcripture-language, ſignifies the time of gathering figs. This every one muſt acknowledge, who looks to Matth. xxi. 34. 41. where καιρὸς τ�ων καρπῶν ſignifies "theſe aſon of gathering the fruits." The circumſtance therefore, that "the time of gathering figs was not yet," inſtead of ſhewing our Lord's expectations to have been unreaſonable, proves that he had ground to look for fruit on it; for, if it had been in uſe to bear, it would have had figs ripening, which, though not perfectly ripe, might have been eaten by one who was hungry, as Jeſus happened to be at that ſeaſon.

2. The miracles ſaid to have been performed upon the Demoniacs may be defended, though no ſuch poſſeſſions have been obſerved either before or ſince. Becauſe for wiſe reaſons the devils may have been allowed to exerciſe eſpecial power over the bodies and ſouls of men, in the age wherein the Son of God lived on earth, to reſtrain their malice and to caſt them out: among the many important ends which determined the Son of God to come down from heaven, this was one; that he might reveal the real ſtate of the inviſible world, ſo far as it has a connection with human affairs. On this ſubject, mankind in all ages had been univerſally and groſsly ignorant. The inhabitants of the Weſt believed the inviſible world to be full of weak capricious divinities, who exerciſed a partial, oppoſite, and often a fruitleſs ſuperintendency over human affairs. The power even of Jupiter himſelf, whom they conſidered as ſupreme, they fancied to be limited by ſome greater inexplicable power, to which they gave the name of Fate. In the Eaſt, two ſupreme independent principles were acknow-

ledged, the one good, the other evil. These two they supposed to be continually at war together, the one to produce all the good he could, the other all the evil. It was thus they accounted for that mixture of good ad evil in the universe, so difficult to be reconciled with just ideas of God. The most pernicious effect however of this system was, that it led men to the basest species of idolatry, to the worship of the devil, in order that they might escape the direful effects of his malice. Mankind thus erring in their conceptions concerning the invisible world, the Son of God came from that world, and testified unto all the things which he there had seen; namely, That there is but one God supreme; That all beings are absolutely subject to him; That he is infinitely powerful and good; and that he is the friend of mankind; That God has an only begotten Son, by whom he made and governs all things; That Jesus himself is this Son of God; That he loves mankind, is their protector, and will be their judge at the last day; That, beside the Father and the Son, there is the Spirit of God, who also loves the human race, assists them in becoming good, and prepares them for eternal life: Finally, that there are in the invisible world many good angels; that they too bear a friendly regard to the virtuous: and that they are often sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation; That Jesus taught men what numerous, powerful, and benevolent friends they have in the invisible world. On the other hand he taught them, that they have there also numerous, powerful, and malicious enemies; namely, the devil and his angels, who go about continually seeking whom they may destroy. At the same time, against the dread of those enemies he has fortified us, by assuring us, that the devils are all absolutely subject to God, who allows them no farther than is agreeable the ends of his own righteous administration; and that in due time their kingdom he will utterly destroy. But the Son of God came to instruct the poor. Therefore he did not content himself with giving a scientific account of the invisible world, for the benefit of the learned. He revealed it in a manner adapted to the comprehension of the vulgar, and which at the same time afforded to all classes of men a compleat demonstration of the truth of what he taught. He made the inhabitants of the invisible world the actual objects of men's senses; restoring unto us the knowledge of these things, in the very manner, wherein, according to the Mosaic history, it had originally been communicated. For, in the first place, being himself "the only begotten Son of God, the bright-"ness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; yea, "having the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily;" by appearing in our world, he manifested the character and perfections of the God-head to the senses of men. More especially, he manifested to them the infinite wisdom of God in the scheme of redemption which he taught. He shewed them his boundless power in the many and great miracles which he performed, or enabled his apostles to perform. He displayed God's unspeakable goodness, in his own life, which was one continued course of beneficence. Hence, in allusion to the fact, that "God was manifested in the flesh," he told his disciples and the

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people, John xii. 45. "He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me." In like manner, when Philip ſaid unto him, John xiv. 8. "Shew "us the Father, and it ſufficeth us;" he replied, 9. "Have I been ſo "long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? "he that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt "thou then, Shew us the Father?" 2. Jeſus ſhewed mankind the maker, governor, and judge of the world. Being himſelf that great perſonage, by appearing in the human nature, and converſing ſo long upon earth, he made himſelf the object of men's ſenſes. By ſupplying eyes and limbs to thoſe whoſe bodies wanted theſe members, and by raiſing the dead, he ſhewed men his creating power. By changing the courſe of nature in all its parts, and by ruling the wills of men, ſo that they did not lay hold on him till his own time came, he ſhewed himſelf to be the governor of the world. By riſing from the dead, and at the ſame time raiſing others who were dead, he demonſtrated that he will raiſe all men, and bring them to judgement. 3. The exiſtence of the devil, and of evil ſpirits his angels, alſo their malice and their power, Jeſus ſhewed by allowing the devils in that age, not only to afflict mankind with incurable diſeaſes, but, by means of thoſe diſeaſes, to take poſſeſſion of their bodies and ſouls. Nevertheleſs, their abſolute ſubjection to him, and conſequently that he is himſelf the ſole governor of the world, he demonſtrated by caſting them out. Whatever power therefore the devils exerciſe in this world, is merely by permiſſion from him. 4. By poſſeſſions of a kind different from theſe juſt now mentioned, Jeſus ſhewed mankind the exiſtence of the Spirit of God, their great friend, together with the reality and efficacy of his operation in their ſalvation. The apoſtles and firſt converts he filled with the Holy Ghoſt. And the reality of that poſſeſſion he made evident to the ſenſes of men, by the miraculous gifts which the perſons filled with the Holy Ghoſt exerciſed. They ſpake a variety of languages, which they knew nothing of before; they uttered prophecies, the meaning of which they did not underſtand; they diſcerned ſpirits; they wrought miracles: ſo that no one, who ſaw theſe men, could doubt that the Spirit of God was in them of a truth. 5. The exiſtence of good angels, and their aſſiduity in miniſtering unto thoſe who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation, Jeſus made evident to the ſenſes of men, by giving the angels frequent occaſions of appearing in viſible forms to miniſter unto him; namely, at his conception, birth, temptation, agony, reſurrection, and aſcenſion. Thus our Lord may be ſaid, while on earth, to have made the whole inhabitants of the inviſible world, along with himſelf, the objects of men's ſenſes, and by ſo doing to have put their exiſtence and their ſeveral characters beyond doubt, in all ſucceeding generations.

Theſe things conſidered, the miracles performed upon the Demoniacs in the Goſpels appear credible, tho' no ſuch poſſeſſions are now obſerved among mankind. The poſſeſſion of devils was peculiar to thoſe times; juſt as the poſſeſſions of the Spirit of God, the appearances of angels, nay, and the appearance of the Son of God himſelf, undoubtedly were. Moreover, as there were reaſons for confining

fining the poſſeſſions of the Spirit of God, the appearances of angels, and the preſence of the Son of God on earth, to the firſt age of Chriſtianity; ſo there may have been reaſons of great importance determining the poſſeſſions of devils to that age alſo. It was not agreeable to the wiſdom of God to repeat in every age, thoſe proofs addreſſed to the ſenſes of men, by which he was pleaſed to reveal to them the ſtate of the inviſible world. The age in which his Son appeared on earth, he honoured with the miraculous effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and with frequent appearances of angels, becauſe thereby the doctrines of his Son, concerning the friends which mankind have in the inviſible world, was made an object of their ſenſes. For the ſame reaſon, he confirmed what his Son taught concerning the devil and his angels, by the peculiar power which he allowed the devils to exerciſe in that age. Of this diſpenſation mankind could not then complain; becauſe in that age the Son of God, and the apoſtles of his Son, lived on earth armed with miraculous powers, for reſtraining and caſting out the devils. Such a diſpenſation tended greatly to the inſtruction and benefit of mankind in all future generations. It has made us ſenſible of the number, nature, and power of our enemies. And this information, while it ſtirs us up to watchfulneſs, is ſo tempered as not to diſpirit us. At the very time our enemies were ſhewed to us, we were fortified againſt the exceſſive dread of them, by the ſenſible demonſtrations which were given in their ejections, proving that the devil, though powerful, is not independent and infinitely powerful, but is abſolutely ſubject to God and to his Son; ſo that he can hurt no man beyond what is permitted him of God. Wherefore, however ſtrange it may ſeem, that evil ſpirits were allowed, not only to afflict mankind with diſeaſes, but by means of thoſe diſeaſes to take poſſeſſion of them, in the age wherein the Son of God appeared on earth, the great importance of the end gained by this diſpenſation, renders it every way worthy of the perfections and government of God, and conſequently gives ſufficient probability to all the poſſeſſions recorded in the Goſpels *.

3d.

* In the above defence of the miracles wrought upon the Demoniacs, it is allowed that the devils have not now that power over the bodies and ſpirits of men, which they exerciſed in our Lord's age. From this, however, it is not to be inferred, that they have no power at all over them. The viſible operation of their power, in the age mentioned, proves the contrary; being intended to convince men, that evil ſpirits often intermeddle in their affairs. Many diſeaſes, called incurable, may be brought on and continued by the operation of evil ſpirits. Other miſchiefs, of various kinds, they may be inſtrumental in producing. For the Scriptures attribute to the devils much more influence in the affairs of the world than moſt people are willing to allow them. For example, the Apoſtle Paul calls the devil, "the prince of the power "of the air," Eph. ii. 2. and his angels "the rulers of the darkneſs of this world," Eph. vi. 12. Theſe titles mark the influence which evil ſpirits have in changing the conſtitution of the air, and by that means of bringing diſeaſes both upon man and beaſt, and of deſtroying the fruits of the earth. Farther, we are told that the Apoſtles delivered over to Satan incorrigible offenders for the deſtruction of their fleſh: and it is to be ſuppoſed, that, in conſequence of this ſentence, the devil puniſhed them with mortal diſeaſes. In the moral world alſo the Scriptures repreſent the devils as having great power: for, on two different occaſions, Jeſus attributed to them the machinations whereby he was put to death, John xiv. 30. Luke xxvii. 53. In like manner, the evangeliſt Luke aſcribes the treachery of Judas to an eſpecial energy of Satan upon his mind, chap xxii 23. and the cowardice of Peter to the ſame cauſe, chap. xxii. 31. alſo the wickedneſs of Ananias, Acts v. 3. Hence Peter, taught by experience,

3d. "The destruction of the herd of swine," which happened in consequence of the dispossession of the Demons of Gadara, may be defended upon the soundest principles of reason, if the foregoing vindication of possessions in general is admitted. Impostors have pretended by exorcisms to expel devils; for the idea of demons and their power is not only of antient original, but hath widely prevailed. These exorcists, however, have never succeeded, unless by compact with impostors like themselves, who have counterfeited possessions, in order to bestow upon their accomplices the honour of miracles. Wherefore, to prevent every suspicion, even the most distant, that this was the case with Jesus in the miracles which he performed upon the possessed, it became both his wisdom and his goodness, in one instance at least, to order matters so that the miracle should be raised above all doubt. This happened in the dispossession of the demons of Gadara. For the devils, who were expelled, being permitted to enter into a herd of swine on the neighbouring mountain, they drave them into the sea, where they perished, to the number of two thousand. This extraordinary circumstance very happily answered the end designed by it; because both the learned and the ignorant must be sensible, that, whatever bargain our Lord may have made with the Demoniacs, he could make none with the swine. In this illustrious miracle therefore, by a proof addressed to the senses of men, a proof which, if it had not been found in the Gospels, the enemies of revelation very probably would have expressly required, Jesus has taught men that there are really evil spirits existing in the world, enemies to mankind, and authors of all evil; that these wicked spirits are many in number; that a multitude of them are often employed in hurting particular persons; that their power and malice are very great; but that they are absolutely subject to God and to his Son; and that God actually restrains them from doing all the mischief they incline. Finally, by this undeniable miracle, Jesus has given credi-

ence, earnestly cautions his disciples to beware of the devil, who, he tells them, 1 Eph. v. 8. "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." To these representations the Apostle Paul agrees, for he tells us, 2 Cor. iv. 4. that "the devil blindeth the minds of "those who believe not." Besides, it is on account of the power which the devil exercises both in the natural and moral world, that our Lord has styled him, in three different places, THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD (John xii. 13. xiv. 30. xvi. 11.); and the Apostle Paul, THE GOD OF THIS WORLD. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Finally, to impress mankind with a sense of their danger from evil spirits, our Lord, in the form of prayer which he taught his disciples, hath commanded us to beseech God "to deliver us (ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ) from the evil one," the devil—Such are the representations of which Jesus and his Apostles have given, of the power exercised by evil spirits in the natural and moral world. If any one takes upon him to disbelieve those things, he ought to remember that they are matters of fact which he cannot reason upon, because he knows nothing of the invisible world at all: and that Jesus, having come from that world, deserves to be credited in the account which he has given of it.

The reader, no doubt, observes, that I have not produced our Lord's temptation in the wilderness as an example of the agency of evil spirits in the moral world. The reason is, Le Clerc affirms, it was transacted in a vision; and the ingenious Mr. Farmer, in his "Inquiry" &c. that it happened in a "Divine Vision." But I now mention it after the other proofs from Scripture, relative to the agency of the Devil in human affairs, not doubting but the whole taken together, will convince impartial judges, that the literal sense of the history of the temptation is agreeable to the representation which the Scriptures have given us of the agency of evil spirits; and the rather, that all the objections which have been raised against the literal sense may easily be removed, by attending to the circumstances of the transaction, and to the true meaning of the phrases which the Evangelists have made use of in that part of their narration.

bility to the other miracles which he performed upon the Demoniacs, and has vindicated his own character from the aſperſions which have been thrown upon it, as if, to aggrandize himſelf in the eyes of the ignorant multitude, he made the ſpectators believe the diſeaſes which he cured were not natural, but the effects of poſſeſſions: while in reality there never was in the world any perſon whatever poſſeſſed with devils.

4. That ſo great a quantity of wine was furniſhed at the marriage of Canna cannot be thought indecent, conſidering that among the Jews marriage feaſts laſted a whole week, and that on thoſe occaſions great numbers of people were gathered together. In the whole of his life, Jeſus ſhewed the moſt perfect temperance. We may therefore believe, that he would not be preſent at any meeting where was exceſs. Far leſs would he be inſtrumental in carrying on the debauch, by furniſhing the means thereof. For which reaſon, though the quantity of wine that was produced ſhould be thought too great for the occaſion and the company, we ought to view it in any favourable light, rather than imagine that he acted here quite contrary to his acknowledged character. In particular, we may ſuppoſe Jeſus did not intend that the whole of the wine which he formed ſhould be drank at this time. He deſigned it as a nuptial preſent, for ſupplying the future neceſſities of the new-married couple. It was uſual for relations and friends to make preſents on ſuch occaſions. Wherefore, ſeeing the nature of the miracle required that the quantity of wine which was formed ſhould be large, to prevent all ſuſpicion of fraud, could there be any thing more proper than that what remained ſhould be charitably deſigned by our Lord as a proviſion for the new family? In the hiſtory no circumſtance occurs, hindering us to put this favourable conſtruction upon the miracle. We are told, indeed, that the governor of the feaſt, when he taſted the wine that was made, ſaid to the bridegroom, ver. 10. "Every man at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and "when men have well drunk, then that which is worſe, but thou "haſt kept the good wine till now." And the adverſaries of revelation complain, that the true import of the word μεθυσθωσι is diſguiſed in the tranſlation, by being rendered, "when men have well "drank; becauſe they ſay the proper meaning of it is, "when men "have got drunk." However, as this is not the conſtant ſignification of the word, the tranſlators cannot be charged with unfair dealing. It means no more, often, but to drink "to ſatisfaction, or plentifully." Thus, Gen. xliii. 30. it is ſaid of Joſephus's brethren that εμεθυσθησαν μετ' αυτου, which can mean no more but that they drank to "ſatisfac-"tion." Nay, the word is applied to "meat" as well as to "drink." For Hoſ. xiv. 7. ſpeaking of the Iſraelites, ſays, ζησονται, και μεθυσθησονται σιτω. In like manner, the apoſtle blaming the Corinthians for eating together in parties, and not waiting for one another, when they met for celebrating the Lord's ſupper, mentions it as one of the inconveniences of that method, 1 Cor. xi. 21. ος μεν πεινα, ος δε μεθυει· "one is hungry, and another is filled." Wherefore, from the words of the governor of the feaſt at Cana, it cannot be inferred,

ferred, that at marriage entertainments it was usual for all the guests to get drunk, far less that the guests were so at this entertainment. To conclude: he, who in the first creation made such liberal provision for the necessities of men, might on a particular occasion, when he was forming nourishment for the natural life of his friends, with all decency do it plentifully: because thus the favour was enhanced; and by the quantity furnished he both shewed his own exuberant goodness, and gave such magnificence to the miracle, as removed it beyond all possibility, and even suspicion of fraud.

5. The resurrection of Lazarus is spoken against, on account of a circumstance taken notice of in the history of that miracle, John xi. 44. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with "grave cloaths." Here the question is, How a man could come out of a grave, who was bound hand and foot? Yet to this puzzling question, I do not despair of returning a satisfactory answer. From the writings of Josephus, and of such travellers as have visited Palestine, we learn that the Jewish sepulchres were generally caves or rooms hewn out of rocks. Wherefore, as the Jews did not make use of coffins in burying the dead, they placed the bodies generally in niches, cut into the sides of these caves or rooms. (See Maundrel's description of the sepulchres of the kings. Travels, p. 76.) This form of the Jewish sepulchres suggests an easy solution of the difficulty under consideration. The Evangelist does not mean to say, that Lazarus walked out of the sepulchre; but that, lying on his back in a nich, he raised himself into a sitting posture; then putting his legs over the edge of his nich or cell, slid down and stood upright upon the floor. All this he might do notwithstanding his arms were close bound to his body, and his legs were tied strait together with the shroud and rollers, wherewith after the manner of the Jews, he was swathed. Accordingly, when he thus came forth, it is said, Jesus ordered them to loose him and let him go; a circumstance plainly importing, that the Evangelist knew Lazarus could not walk till he was unbound.

SECT. IV.

The actions, ascribed in the Gospels to the Apostles, are probable.

I. THE apostles are thought to have shewed too much precipitancy in their attachment to their master. This seeming impropriety was taken notice of antiently by Porphyry and Julian, who offered it as a personal objection against Matthew's character, but not against the history itself. In either view, however, the objection is frivolous and incompetent, arising merely from the brevity of the narration. I acknowledge that three of the Evangelists do not mention our Lord's having had any previous interviews with the persons whom he afterwards called to be his apostles. Yet from this circumstance to infer, that they had neither seen nor heard of one another before, would be very absurd. John in his Gospel assures us, that Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael, all of whom afterwards became

Chriſt's apoſtles, waited upon him, and converſed with him at Jordan, when he came to be baptiſed of John. They were therefore no ſtrangers to his character and pretenſions; but had a favourable opinion of both, long before they joined themſelves to him as his diſciples. How then can it be thought ſtrange, that, when Jeſus called them to follow him, they readily obeyed? The cenſure indeed is levelled chiefly againſt Matthew, whom Jeſus called from the receipt of cuſtom. Yet he likewiſe may be vindicated by the apology juſt now offered. The receipt of cuſtom, from which he was called to follow Jeſus, was near Capernaum, the place of our Lord's ordinary reſidence. Wherefore, if this publican, as is probable, was an inhabitant of Capernaum, he could be no ſtranger to our Lord's character, doctrine, and miracles. He may not only have heard him often preach, but he may have ſeen him perform miracles; and from both may have formed a juſt notion of his pretenſions. In ſuch circumſtances, could Matthew be blamed for inſtantly obeying the call of one, whom he believed to be Meſſiah, and who in calling him conferred a favour upon him? The ſame account may be given of James and John the ſons of Zebedee, and of all the reſt; who, beſides the perſonal knowledge which they had of Jeſus, were no doubt acquainted with the Baptiſt's teſtimony concerning him, and with the auguſt character which the voice from heaven had given him, when, in the hearing of the multitude, it declared him to be "the beloved "Son of God, in whom he was well-pleaſed."

2. It is thought, that if our Lord's character and miracles had been really ſuch as in the Goſpels they are ſaid to have been, it is not probable that any of his diſciples would have betrayed him. The expectation which they had of being raiſed to the chief places in his ſuppoſed kingdom, would have attached even the moſt covetous of them to his perſon; and the conſideration of his kowledge and power as the Son of God would have deterred the moſt daring among them from attempting any thing to his diſadvantage. The ſum which the traitor received for giving up his maſter, in value did not exceed three pounds ten ſhillings ſterling. It was therefore a trifle, which the moſt covetous wretch cannot be ſuppoſed to have taken as an equivalent for the life of a friend, from whom he had any expectations of gain at all. To ſuppoſe that he betrayed his maſter, in reſentment of the rebuke which he gave him, for blaming the woman who came with the precious ointment, is attributing too much to the force of ſuch a paſſion. That rebuke was not levelled againſt him ſingly. It was directed alſo to the reſt. Beſides, it ſhould be conſidered, that though he ſtruck the bargain with the chief prieſts about betraying his maſter, a few hours after he was rebuked, almoſt two days paſſed before he fulfilled his bargain; ſo that he had time enough to think deliberately of what he was going to do. From all this our adverſaries infer, that the treachery of Judas, as we were pleaſed to call it, was occaſioned by ſome ſuſpicion which he entertained of his Maſter's character. His eyes, it ſeems, were at length opened. He found that Jeſus was not the Meſſiah; and he delivered him into the hands

of

of the ſupreme court of juſtice, in a fit of deſpair, for having been ſo beguiled by him. But to this I reply, that though no probable account could be given of the motives which induced Judas to betray his Maſter, there are in the hiſtory itſelf circumſtances, which demonſtrate that his treachery did not proceed from any ſuſpicion which he entertained of his Maſter's character. For, in the firſt place, if this diſciple had thought his Maſter an impoſtor, and propoſed nothing by his treachery but the price he put on his life, how came he to ſell him for ſuch a trifle, when he well knew the prieſts would have given him any ſum, rather than not have gotten him into their hands? In the ſecond place, if Judas believed Jeſus to be an impoſtor, he muſt have obſerved ſomething in his behaviour which led him to form ſuch an opinion of him. And, in that caſe, he certainly would have mentioned the matter to the chief prieſts and elders at the time he made the bargain with them. It is plain, however, that he made then no diſcovery tending to the prejudice of his Maſter's character; otherwiſe the prieſts would have urged it againſt Jeſus in the courſe of his trial, when they were at ſuch a loſs for evidence to prove him a deceiver. For, even in the eye of impartiality itſelf, the teſtimony of a conſtant attendant is the beſt evidence for detecting an impoſtor. Moreover, they would have urged the diſcoveries made by Judas againſt the apoſtles after their Maſter's death, when they reproved them for preaching in his name; Acts. iv. 24. and v. 27. Nay, they would have upbraided Judas himſelf with it, when he told them he had "ſinned in betraying innocent blood," and not have anſwered coldly, "What is that to us; ſee thou to it?" Thirdly, if Judas thought his Maſter an impoſtor, how came he, before he hanged himſelf, ſolemnly to declare to the chief prieſts the innocence of the man, and his remorſe for having betrayed him. If Judas knew Jeſus to be an impoſtor, he could have no remorſe for what he had done. He had only put him into the hands of a court, whoſe province it was to judge of his pretenſions. Jeſus deſerved the ſentence which his judges had paſſed upon him. When this ſentence was executed, what occaſion was there for the perſon who had brought it about to have any remorſe? Or why ſhould he have fled to a halter, for relief from his own tormenting thoughts?

Having thus ſhewn, from all the circumſtances of this tranſaction, that no argument can be drawn to our Lord's diſadvantage from the conduct of Judas; I now go on to propoſe what in my opinion were the motives determining him to an action, which will render his memory odious, while the human ſpecies ſubſiſts. He was ſo covetous, we are told, as to ſteal money out of the common bag. It is therefore more than probable, that he firſt followed Jeſus with a view to the riches and other temporal advantages which he expected Meſſiah's friends would enjoy. And, as hitherto he had reaped none of thoſe advantages, he grew impatient under the delay; and the more ſo, that Jeſus towards the end of his miniſtry had expreſſly diſcouraged all ambitious views among his diſciples, and had rejected the opportunity of erecting his kingdom, offered him by the multi-

tude, who accompanied him with Hoſannas into Jeruſalem. Judas's impatience therefore becoming exceſſive, put him upon the ſcheme of delivering his Maſter into the hands of the ſenate, thinking it the moſt proper method of obliging him to aſſume the dignity of Meſſiah, and conſequently of enabling him to reward his followers. For as this court was compoſed of the chief prieſts, elders, and ſcribes, that is, the principal perſons of the nation, Judas did not doubt but that Jeſus, when before ſuch an aſſembly, would prove his pretenſions to their full conviction, gain them over to his intereſts, and enter forthwith on his regal dignity. And though he muſt have been ſenſible, that the method he took to bring this about would be very offenſive to his Maſter, he might think the ſucceſs of it would procure his pardon, and even recommend him to favour. In the mean time, his project, however plauſible it might appear, was far from being free of difficulty. And therefore, while he revolved it in his mind, many things no doubt occurred to ſtagger his reſolution. At length an incident happened which urged him on. Thinking himſelf affronted by the rebuke which Jeſus had given him in the matter of the laſt anointing, and that rebuke ſitting heavier on him, as he had procured a former mark of his Maſter's diſpleaſure, by an imprudence of the ſame kind, he was provoked. And though his reſentment was not ſuch as could inſpire him with the horrid deſign of putting his Maſter to death, it impelled him to execute the reſolution he had formed, of making him alter his meaſures, by putting him into the hands of the grandees. Thus the devil, laying hold on the various paſſions which agitated the traitor's breaſt, tempted him by them all. It is evident, therefore, that Judas was not moved to betray Jeſus, by any thing ſuſpicious in his character. His perfidy, inſtead of implying that he entertained doubts of his Maſter's integrity, plainly proves, that he had the fulleſt conviction of his being the Meſſiah. And, to ſay the truth, it was not poſſible for any one, intimately acquainted with our Lord as Judas was, to judge otherwiſe of him; having ſeen his miracles, which were great and true beyond exception, and having experienced his divine power in the ability of working miracles, which along with the reſt of the apoſtles he had received from him, and no doubt exerciſed with extraordinary pleaſure. No objection therefore lies againſt the Goſpels on account of the treachery of Judas, of which ſo plauſible an explication can be given; an explication which is not only conformable to the known character of the man, but honourable alſo for our Lord, againſt whoſe pretenſions in ſeems to bear hard at firſt view.

SECT. V.

Shewing that the actions of our Lord's enemies are probable.

IN the Goſpels, Herod King of Judea, and his ſon of the ſame name who was tetrarch of Galilee, Pontius Pilate the Roman governour, with Annas and Caiaphas Jewiſh high prieſts, are all mentioned by name, and repreſented as unfriendly to our Lord. The Scribes, Phariſees, Elders, and Chief Prieſts, that is, the perſons of greateſt diſtinction

distinction in the Jewish nation, are set forth in the same light. They persecuted Jesus through the whole course of his ministry, and at last put him to death as a malefactor in the public place of execution near Jerusalem. To examine the particular actions ascribed in the Gospels to the persons just now named, would be tedious and needless. I shall only observe, in general, that all the evil things said by the Evangelists to have been done by those persons, and among the rest the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem, the horrid action of Herod, are rendered sufficiently probable by the accounts which profane historians have given of them; especially Josephus, who has written fully of those persons and times. See Dr. Lardner's Credibility, Vol. i. ii.

On reviewing the matters mentioned in the several sections of this chapter, it appears, that all the actions without exception, which the Evangelists have recorded, are of a probable nature; whether they be those ascribed to Jesus himself, or to his disciples, or to his enemies. For they are all, not only things possible in themselves, but they are perfectly suitable to the characters of the persons, to whom they are ascribed. And if any particular action has been objected to, upon a more perfect knowledge of the action itself and of its circumstances, every shadow of blame vanishes. Wherefore, upon the narrowest search that it is possible for us to make, we must acknowledge, that the Gospels cannot be found fault with as books of history, on account of the impropriety or improbability of any of the actions, whether ordinary or extraordinary, therein recorded.

Of the Argument arising from the Conversion of the World to Christianity.

WE come now to the most shining of all the proofs, whereby the Gospels are established; a proof taken from an event the grandest undoubtedly that ever happened on earth; an event too, of which we are as certain as we are of the present existence of mankind, and that is, the conversion of the world from heathenism to Christianity, by means of the publication of the Gospel-history. The persons to whom the things concerning the Lord Jesus were first preached, entertained no doubt of them. Their forsaking the religion in which they had been educated, and their embracing the Christian faith, is such a demonstration of their belief of the history of Jesus, that to demand farther proof of their belief, were idle and impertinent. But if great numbers of sensible people every where believed the history of Jesus, immediately upon its being preached to them, when it was in their power to have detected whatever

falsehood was reported of him, no doubt can now-a-days be reasonably entertained concerning this history; especially as the belief of it was attended with no advantage, but rather exposed people to all manner of personal sufferings.—Before I offer the particulars whereby the reader will be enabled to form a proper notion of the conversion of the world, and of the importance of the argument resulting therefrom, it will be necessary to propose the historical evidence upon which we believe, not only that this astonishing revolution in the religious opinions of mankind actually happened, but that it was effected by the persons at the time, and in the manner, wherein we affirm it came to pass.

SECT. I.

Testimonies from heathen authors, proving that the Christian religion took its rise in Judea, and that the world was converted at the time we suppose.

EVERY one knows that the gospels have fixed the origin of the Christian religion to the reign of Tiberius. Agreeably to this representation, there is not to be found, prior to the reign of Tiberius, the smallest vestige of Christianity, nor the least trace of any sect setting itself in opposition, whether to the superstition of the Jews, or to the idolatry of the Gentiles. Till then, Jews and Gentiles enjoyed the peaceable possession of their respective religions. But from that period downwards, in all kinds of books, there is mention made of the Christian sect, of their opinions, of their numbers, of their endeavours to subvert the established religions, and of the persecutions they underwent on that score; of their constancy in sufferings; and of the general establishment of their faith throughout the Roman empire.

The account which the Christian record, intituled, "Acts of the "apostles," gives of the origin, progress and state of Christianity in the first ages is, that this faith took its rise in Judea, the country which was the scene of our Lord's ministry; that it began at the time in which the Gospels say Jesus lived; that the preachers and professors of this new religion were severely persecuted, first in Judea, and then in the different provinces of the Roman empire; that, notwithstanding this, Christianity spread itself quickly into all the noted towns of Asia, Greece, and Italy: that Rome itself was early blessed with the light of the Gospel, and cherished many converts to the new faith; lastly, that in a short time our religion spread itself upon the ruins of idolatry, through all the provinces of the Roman empire.

This account of the origin, progress and state of Christianity is highly worthy of credit, notwithstanding it is given by a Christian writer, who was himself the author of one of the Gospels. The reason is, it agrees with, and is confirmed by, the testimony of the Roman historians of that age, and is not contradicted by any of those learned men, who in the infancy of Christianity

tianity wrote againſt the cauſe itſelf, or againſt its abettors. To ſhew this, is the deſign of the preſent ſection.

1. Firſt of all then, Suetonius repreſents the Chriſtians to have been very numerous in Rome, ſo early as the reign of Claudius, who ſucceeded to the empire A. D. 41. about ſeven years after our Lord's death. Claud. cap. 25. "Judæos, impulſore Chriſto, aſſidue tumultuantes," &c. But of this teſtimony enough has been ſaid B. II. C. III. § 1. p. 299.

2. Tacitus likewiſe, who wrote about thirty years after our Lord's death, tells us that Chriſt was the founder of the Chriſtian religion, that he lived in Judea under the reign of Tiberius, that he had many diſciples, and that he was put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate. See the original paſſage with remarks in the following ſection, Art. I.

3. Arrian was the diſciple of Epictetus, the Stoic philoſopher, who lived at Rome in the reign of Nero, about 25 years after our Lord's death. Wherefore both the maſter and the ſcholar being contemporary with Peter and Paul, they may have ſeen theſe apoſtles in Rome. This Arrian, in the ſecond book of his Commentary upon Epictetus' Manual, chap. ix, towards the end, ſpeaks of baptized and elected perſons, whom he calls Jews; but who, from the circumſtance of their baptiſm and election, muſt have been converted to Chriſtianity; and tells us, that in their conduct they were always ſteady to their principles, in ſo much that when a man's practice did not correſpond with his profeſſions, the common ſaying was, he is not a Jew (or Chriſtian), but a diſſembler.

4. Juſtin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, which he committed to writing about the year 146, deſcribes the progreſs of Chriſtianity as follows. "There is no nation, whether of Barbari-"ans, or Greeks, or any others, what names ſoever they are called "by, whether they live in waggons, or without houſes, or in tents, "among whom prayers are not made and thankſgiving offered up to "the Father and Creator of all, through the name of the crucified "Jeſus," Dial. p. 345.

5. Lucian the Syrian philoſopher, who lived under Adrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, about 120 years after Chriſt's death, in his hiſtory of the death of Peregrinus, having told how this philoſopher joined the Chriſtians in Paleſtine, and became a man of great note among them, adds, that "having been taken into "cuſtody on the ſcore of his new doctrine, this miſhap did much "contribute to his glory, and helped to bring him into credit. For "upon this news the Chriſtians, who of his private diſtreſs made "their public calamity, began to ſet heaven and earth at work, for the "endeavouring to procure his enlargement; which ſeeing they could "not bring about, they paid him all the devoirs imaginable, by way "of ſweetening and mollifying his impriſonment. A whole troop of "old women, widows, and orphans, were ſeen by break of day at his "priſon door; and the principal paſſed the nights with him, after "having corrupted the jaylor. They banqueted there too, and cele-

" brated their myſteries; and deputies came thither from their " churches of Aſia, for the aſſuring him of the grief they lay under " on his account, and for the offering him their aſſiſtance. For it is " almoſt incredible what care and diligence they uſe on ſuch occaſions, " ſparing nothing for the relieving one another in neceſſity: inſomuch " that they ſent him money from all parts on this pretext; and this " their charity proved to him a vaſt revenue. In a word, thoſe miſe- " rable creatures deſpiſe all things and death itſelf in hopes of immor- " tality, and offer themſelves willingly to puniſhments. For their " firſt legiſlator made them believe they are all brethren, when once " they have renounced our religion! and that adoring their cruci- " fied Saviour, they live according to the laws (namely of their " own religion) ſo as they deſpiſe all, and believe all is in common, " receiving his dogmas with a blind obedience." Spence's tranſla- tion. From this teſtimony it plainly appears how numerous the Chriſtians were in Lucian's time, not much above 100 years after Chriſt's death. In this likewiſe the crucifixion of Jeſus is acknow- leged; he is called by the name of Saviour; the attachment of his diſciples to his doctrines and precepts is ſhewed; and their behavi- our towards one another is deſcribed; and all in a manner very con- formable to the repreſentation given of theſe things in the books of the New Teſtament: on which account this is juſtly eſteemed a very valuable relick of antiquity.——The ſame Lucian, in his Pſeudomanti- tis, informs us, that the Chriſtians of Pontus having ſet about ex- poſing Alexander's impoſture, he complained that Pontus was full of them. His words are, " When ſeveral wiſe men had diſcovered " the cheat, and particularly the philoſophers of the Epicurean ſect, " he exclaimed that all the country was filled with Chriſtians " and blaſphemers, who ſowed calumnies againſt him; and com- " manded that the people ſhould ſtone them, if they expected the " favour and bleſſing of God upon their land." Spence's tranſla- tion, p. 255. The Epicureans and Chriſtians, it ſeems, agreed in this, that both of them were active in expoſing the folly of the commonly practiſed worſhip. Hence by the bigoted Heathens they were always joined together.——Moreover, Lucian tells us, that the Chriſtians were every where the objects of public odium, and that they were ranked with Atheiſts, as being equally impious. For, in his account of the myſteries celebrated in Pon- tus by Alexander, he ſays, the Chriſtians were excluded along with Atheiſts and Epicureans, by a ſolemn proclamation, the form of which was the ſame with that uſed at Athens in the celebration of the myſteries there. " He had alſo inſtituted a kind of ſociety " or fraternity, wherein they caried torches with various cere- " monies, which laſted for three whole days. On the firſt they pro- " claimed as they do at Athens: If there be any Epicurean, or " Chriſtian, or Atheiſt, who is come to make a mock of our myſ- " teries, let him depart; but let the true believers be initiated in " God's name.' Then he, marching in the front, cried out, ' Hence

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" ye Chriſtians;' and the whole multitude anſwered, 'Hence ye Epi-
" cureans." Spence's tranſlation.

6. The emperor Marcus Aurelius, who ſucceeded to the empire A. D. 161, in his Meditations, Lib. xi. § 3. ſpeaks of the Chriſtians as exiſting in his time, and mentions their fortitude in ſufferings, calling it obſtinacy. For, deſcribing the condition of the ſoul of a virtuous man, he repreſents it as ready to be ſeparated from the body, or to be extinguiſhed, or to be diſſipated, or to exiſt a while longer: then adds, " That it is thus prepared, muſt proceed from its own " proper judgement, and not from pure obſtinacy, as is the caſe with " the Chriſtians."

7. Galen the phyſician, who was born at Pergamus A. D. 131, in the reign of the emperor Adrian, has ſpoken alſo of the Chriſtians, and of the firmneſs wherewith they maintained their faith. Says he, " One may ſooner prevail with the followers of Moſes and " Chriſt to change their principles, than with thoſe phyſicians and " philoſophers who are engaged in ſects."

8. Irenæus, in his Treatiſe againſt Hereſies, which, according to Dodwell, he publiſhed A. D. 176, has accidentally deſcribed the ſtate of the church in his time, by obſerving that " the Chriſtian " religion was diffuſed through the whole earth to the very ends of " it." This is the more to be remarked, conſidering that the perſecutions had been ſo very ſharp and numerous and of long continuance, and ſo cloſe on the back of one another.

9. Tertullian, in his Apology, publiſhed A. D. 200, gives an account of the prevalence of the Chriſtian faith in his time, For, addreſſing himſelf to the Roman governors, probably the proconſul in Africa, and the chief magiſtrate reſiding in Carthage, he ſays, Apologet. c. 37. " We are but of yeſterday: nevertheleſs we have " filled every thing belonging to you; cities, iſlands, villages, free " boroughs, aſſembling places, the armies themſelves, the wards, " the rolls of Judges, the palace, the ſenate: we leave to you no-" thing but the temples."——The ſame author, Adverſ. Judæos, cap. 7. affirms that all the nations had believed in Chriſt, " Par-" thians, Medes, Elamites, and thoſe who inhabit Meſopotamia, " Armenia, Phrygia, Capadocia, and the inhabitants of Pontus, " and Aſia, and Pamphilia; they who tarry in Egypt, and they " who inhabit the region of Africa, beyond Cyrene, both Romans " and natives. Likewiſe the Jews in Jeruſalem, and the other na-" tions: ſo that already the various tribes of Getuli, and the many " countries of the Moors, and all the provinces of Spain, and the " different nations of Gaul, and the parts of Britain inacceſſible to " the Romans, are now ſubject to Chriſt: and the Sarmatians, and " Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians, and many remote nations " and provinces, and many iſlands to us unknown, which we can-" not enumerate, in all which places the name of Chriſt, who is " already come, reigns."

10. Porphyry likewiſe, the Tyrian philoſopher, in the life which he wrote of his maſter Plotinus, who was born in the 13th year of

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the emperor Severus, A. D. 206, informs us, that while Plotinus lived in Rome, whither he came in the fortieth year of his age, A. D. 246, there were many Chriſtians in the City. De vitâ Plotin. c. 16.

11. Cornelius was biſhop of Rome in the time of the Decian perſecution, A. D. 251. He, writing to Cyprian biſhop of Carthage, gives the following account of the church at Rome. "We have in "this place forty-four preſbyters, ſeven deacons, and as many ſub-"deacons; and widows, and other perſons maintained by the "church, fifteen hundred." Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. Lib. vi. C. 43. Now ſuppoſing every twentieth perſon to have received maintenance, there will have been no leſs than thirty thouſand Chriſtians in Rome at this time. A vaſt number, conſidering that, the emperors having their uſual reſidence in this city, their edicts for perſecution muſt have been executed with the utmoſt rigour, under their eye, and by their direction.

12. Lampridius, a Heathen writer, who flouriſhed in the reign of Diocleſian, A. D. 290, tells us, that the emperor Alexander Severus, who obtained the purple A. D. 222. had the image of Chriſt in his private chapel, and would have built him a temple, and admitted him among the Gods, as he ſays Adrian, who became emperor A. D. 117. intended to have done, had not the prieſts aſſured him from their divination, that it would make all the world Chriſtians, and cauſe the other temples to be deſerted. His words are, "If he had leiſure in the morning, he worſhiped in his private "chapel, wherein he had the deified emperors, making choice "however of the beſt. There alſo he had the more holy ſouls, "among whom was Apollonius, and, as a writer of that age ſays, "Chriſt, Abraham, and Orpheus, and ſuch like Gods; alſo the "image of his anceſtors.——He intended to build Chriſt a temple, "and to receive him among the Gods; which Adrian likewiſe is "ſaid to have deſigned, who in every city cauſed temples to be "raiſed without images, which, becauſe they had no Gods, are at "this day called Adriani. Theſe temples he is ſaid to have pre-"pared for the end now mentioned; but he was hindered by thoſe "who, having conſulted the auſpices, found that if what he pro-"poſed were accompliſhed, all men would become Chriſtians, and "the other temples would be deſerted." Lamprid. apud Hiſt. Auguſt. Script. p. 439. D. p. 351. E. Adrian began to conceive a favourable opinion of Chriſtianity, about the beginning of the ſecond century, that is, in the very infancy of the Goſpel. It ſeems, mankind thus early ſhewed ſo ſtrong a diſpoſition to embrace our faith, that the emperor judged it good policy to adopt it into the ſyſtem of religions profeſſed throughout the empire. But the Heathen prieſts foreſeeing, that if this honour was conferred upon Chriſtianity, the whole world would embrace it, and the temples be deſerted, diverted the emperor from his purpoſe, by feigning that the gods had given them premonition of the direful conſequences.

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13. Arnobius, formerly a Heathen teacher of rhetoric at Sicca in Africa, flourished A. D. 306. In his first book against the Gentiles, he speaks thus; "Is not this an argument for our faith, that "in so little a space of time, the sacraments of Christ's great name "are diffused over the world? That orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, men of great genius, love our religion, despising those things wherein before "they trusted? Slaves will rather suffer torments for their masters, "wives sooner part with their husbands, and children rather be disinherited by their parents, than abandon the Christian faith."

14. The emperor Julian, who obtained the purple A. D. 361, acknowledges, apud Cyrill. Lib. x. p. 327, that, in the days of John the Apostle, great numbers in many cities of Greece and Italy embraced the religion of Jesus, which, on account of its spreading nature, he calls a distemper wherewithal people were seized. By the confession therefore of Julian himself, Christianity even in his time was no recent forgery, but had existence as early as the Christian records inform us.——The same Julian, in his letter to Arsakios, chief of the Pagan priests in Galatia, which is the 49th epistle, Oper. p. 429, gives an honourable testimony to the practice of the antient Christians. His words are, "Do we not see what has "chiefly increased this impiety," so he falsely calls the Christian religion: "their benevolence to strangers, their care to bury the "dead, and their feigned sanctity of life? every one of which ought "to be truly and carefully practised by us. Not that this sanctity "is sufficient; but in general oblige all the priests in Galatia, by "threats or persuasions to be diligent, or dismiss them from the "priestly function, if with their wives, children, and servants, they "do not attend upon the Gods, and do not hinder their servants "and children, or their wives, who are Galileans, to behave impiously towards their Gods, and to prefer piety to impiety." Then he gives particular precepts concerning the behaviour of his priests, whom he would have formed upon the model of the Christian priests, as it would seem. For he says, "Exhort each priest "not to go to the theatre, not to drink in taverns, and to follow "no base or infamous trades; and those who obey you, honour, "and those who disobey, banish." Next, he orders houses to be set up for the entertainment of strangers, whether they were of the emperor's religion or not, and settles a revenue upon them: adding, "For it is a shame, that seeing there is no beggar among the "Jews, and these impious Galileans maintain not only their own "poor, but ours, that the latter should be destitute of the help we "ought to afford them."

Thus, by a clear succession of undoubted testimonies, it appears that the Christian religion took its rise in Judea, as the Gospels affirm; that it began in the reign of the emperor Tiberius, the time fixed for it in the Christian records; and that from Judea it immediately spread itself into the neighbouring countries, and by degrees into all the provinces of the Roman empire, great multitudes every

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where forſaking the religion of their anceſtors for the ſake of this better faith, and more perfect form of worſhip. It is therefore certain, that the world was converted to Chriſtianity preciſely at the time, and by the inſtruments, we ſuppoſe.

SECT. II.

Shewing that the Chriſtian religion ſpread itſelf into all countries under the ſevereſt perſecution.

IT is not ſufficient to have ſhewed, that Chriſtianity began at the time mentioned in the Goſpels. We muſt ſhew likewiſe that in the firſt ages mankind embraced our faith under perſecution. This fact, being of great importance in the preſent argument, merits particular attention; for which reaſon I have claſſed the proofs of it by themſelves. I muſt however obſerve, that theſe proofs eſtabliſh likewiſe the point handled in the preceding ſection, namely, the antiquity of our religion, and the numerouſneſs of its diſciples in the firſt ages. It ſeems the Heathen magiſtrates, prieſts, and philoſophers, from the beginning, were jealous of our ſect, on account of its numbers. And not knowing any other way to prevent the world from being over-run with the new principles, they rigorouſly perſecuted thoſe who eſpouſed them, in whatever province or corner they appeared. But though I am to ſhew that the profeſſors of the Chriſtian religion were from the beginning perſecuted in all countries, it is not my purpoſe to ſpeak of the ſufferings of the Apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the Goſpel. Theſe have been ſufficiently explained already, B. III. C. III. § 3. What I propoſe is, to demonſtrate from hiſtory and other authentic evidence, that in the firſt ages the profeſſion as well as the preaching of the Goſpels unanimouſly expoſed men to manifold and great ſufferings. The importance of the ſubject requires that this proof be not ſlightly paſſed over. For the perſecutions which the firſt Chriſtians ſuſtained, as we ſhall ſee by and by, demonſtrate that nothing but the ſtrongeſt conviction could determine them to embrace Chriſtianity. The Goſpel-hiſtory was rendered indubitable by the teſtimony and miracles of the Apoſtles, and of the reſt of the eye-witneſſes. People therefore did not ſcruple to part with every thing, and to undergo every thing, for the ſake of a religion ſo clearly proved to be divine.

The enemies of revelation, ſenſible of the force of this argument, have, upon I know not what foundation, inſinuated or affirmed, that the ſufferings of the firſt Chriſtians were not ſo great as they are commonly thought to have been. To this purpoſe, Mr. Voltaire, in his Eſſay on univerſal hiſtory, vol. i. chap. 5. pag. 60. where, ſpeaking of the Jews, he ſays, "Having an implacable ha-"tred to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, they accuſed them of being "the incendiaries who deſtroyed ſome part of Rome under the "emperor Nero. It was as unjuſt to impute this accident to the "Chriſtians as to Nero. Neither he, nor the Chriſtians, nor the

" Jews, had any intereſt in ſetting Rome on fire. But there was a " neceſſity for appeaſing the populace, who had the ſame deteſtation " as the Jews for thoſe ſtrangers. A few poor wretches were ſacri- " ficed to the public vengeance. This inſtance of violence ought " not, I apprehend, to be reckoned among the perſecutions which " the Chriſtians underwent on account of their faith: it had no- " thing at all to do with their religion, which was not ſo much as " known, and which the Romans confounded with Judaiſm, then " under the protection of the laws.——This is very certain, that it " was not the diſpoſition of the ſenate to perſecute any man for his " opinion; that no emperor ever attempted to force the Jews to " change their religion, neither after the revolt in Veſpaſian's reign, " nor that which broke out under Adrian. It is true, their wor- " ſhip was reviled and derided, and ſtatues were erected in their " temple before its demolition. But never did emperor, procon- " ſul, or Roman ſenate, dream of hindering the Jews from believ- " ing the Moſaic law. This ſingle reaſon ſhews what liberty the " Chriſtians had to extend their religion in private. The Chriſtians " were not moleſted by any of the emperors till the reign of Do- " mitian. Dion Caſſius ſays, that under this emperor there were " ſome people condemned as Atheiſts, and for imitating the man- " ners of the Jews. It ſeems, that this oppreſſion, of which we " have but very imperfect accounts, was neither long nor general. " We cannot exactly tell why ſome perſons were exiled, nor why " they were recalled.—Nerva, Veſpaſian, Titus, Trajan, Adrian, " and the Antoninuſes, were not perſecutors. Trajan, having pro- " hibited all private aſſemblies, wrote notwithſtanding to Pliny: " 'You muſt make no inquiry after the Chriſtians.' Theſe words " ſufficiently prove, that they might conceal themſelves, and exer- " ciſe their religion with prudence, though through the malice of the " prieſts and the hatred of the Jews they were frequently carried be- " fore the magiſtrates and puniſhed. The people, and eſpecially " the people of the provinces, hated the Chriſtians. They incited " the magiſtrates againſt them, and were for having them expoſed " to wild beaſts in the circus. The emperor Adrian not only gave " ſtrict charge to Fondanus the pro-conſul of Aſia Minor, not to " perſecute them, but his orders expreſsly mention, 'That if the " Chriſtians were ſlandered,' the ſlanderer ſhould be ſeverely puniſh- " ed.' This regard to juſtice in Adrian, made ſome people falſely " imagine, that this emperor was a Chriſtian. But would he, who " erected a temple to Antinous, erect one to Jeſus Chriſt? Marcus " Aurelius ordained, that the Chriſtians ſhould not be perſecuted " on the account of religion. Caracalla, Heliogabalus, Alexander, " Philip, Galien, openly protected them; therefore they had full " leiſure to extend their doctrine, and to ſtrengthen their infant " church." Nugent's tranſlation.

In oppoſition to theſe falſe colourings and violent contradictions of truth, I place the following clear and authentic teſtimonies, many of them furniſhed by the Heathens themſelves, whereby it will ap-

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pear, that from the very beginning the Chriſtians were perſecuted expreſsly on account of their religion; that in theſe perſecutions infinite multitudes ſuffered death, that the evils which followed the profeſſion of the Goſpel were not confined to a particular province or ſeaſon; but were met with in every country, and continued for the ſpace of three hundred years.

The firſt and moſt ancient ſufferings of the Chriſtians are thoſe which they underwent from the inferior magiſtrates, from the prieſts, and from the populace in every country, immediately upon their embracing the Goſpel. It would be tedious, and indeed needleſs, to recount all the inſtances mentioned in the Chriſtian records. The general appeals made there concerning thoſe evils, will give a juſt enough idea of them. For example, the Chriſtians in Judea ſuffered great afflictions immediately on receiving the Goſpel, Heb. x. 32. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after "ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33. "Partly whilſt ye were made a gazing ſtock, both by reproaches "and afflictions; and partly whilſt ye became companions of them "that were ſo uſed. 34. For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds, "and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in your"ſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance." So likewiſe the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia, 1 Pet. iv. 12. "Beloved, think it not ſtrange concern"ing the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange "thing happened unto you. 13. But rejoice in as much as ye are "partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt.——15. But let none of you "ſuffer as a murderer, &c. 16. Yet if any man ſuffer as a Chriſ"tian, let him not be aſhamed; but let him glorify God on this "behalf." And the churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1. "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God be"ſtowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2. How that in a great "trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep po"verty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." And the church at Theſſalonica, 2 Theſſ. i. 4. "So that we ourſelves glory "in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all "your perſecutions and tribulations that ye endure. 1 Theſſ ii. 14. "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, "which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus: for ye alſo have ſuffered like "things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews. "15. Who both killed the Lord Jeſus, and their own prophets, "and have perſecuted us." And the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. i. 6. "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation and ſal"vation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings "which we alſo ſuffer:—7. And our hope of you is ſtedfaſt, know"ing that as you are partakers of the ſufferings, ſo ſhall ye be alſo "of the conſolation." 2 Tim. iii. 12. "Yea, and all that will "live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution." The Apoſtle Paul acknowledges, that he himſelf had been a violent perſecutor of the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, 1 Tim. i. 12—"putting me

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"into the miniſtry; 13. Who was before a blaſphemer, and a per-"ſecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, becauſe I did it "ignorantly in unbelief:" And more fully in his defence before Agrippa; a paſſage worthy of particular notice, becauſe it ſhews how great and general the perſecution was which the Chriſtians ſuffered in Judea from the beginning. Such was the miſerable condition into which all the firſt Chriſtians were brought by their belief and profeſſion of the Goſpel. Againſt this proof offered, I do not ſee what can be objected. The early publication of the writings, wherein theſe things are mentioned, renders them ſufficiently credible; becauſe, if the Goſpel had not expoſed its profeſſors to ſufferings, all men muſt immediately have been ſenſible of the falſehood of theſe affirmations, and have rejected the books which contained them. Beſides, what purpoſe could it ſerve, for the Chriſtians to ſpeak of themſelves as deſpiſed, afflicted, and perſecuted every where? Such repreſentations of the conſequences of the Chriſtian profeſſion could allure no new proſelytes; and as for the old ones, they would rather be diſguſted than pleaſed with ſuch things. Not to mention that this was the ready way to raiſe their fears, and tempt them to apoſtatize. It is evident, therefore, that theſe affecting repreſentations of the miſeries, to which the firſt Chriſtians were ſubjected, proceeded from no other cauſe but truth alone.

However, we do not depend upon the Chriſtian records alone for our knowledge of this important fact, that the diſciples of Jeſus were every where perſecuted in the early ages: It is atteſted likewiſe by a variety of Heathen writers, who inform us farther, that the prevalence of the Chriſtian religion excited the jealouſy of the Roman emperors themſelves; and that, to ſtop it, they raiſed furious perſecutions againſt its abettors. The fact is certain, that the laws for perſecuting the diſciples of Jeſus were iſſued by the Roman emperors, conſequently theſe perſecutions were extended to the whole empire; and they were put in execution by the governors of the provinces, often with great cruelty. Theſe perſecutions are reckoned to have been ten in number, for ſo many were the general more violent and known perſecutions. Nevertheleſs, it is certain, that, during the firſt three centuries, the Chriſtians were continually harraſſed in one province of the empire or other. The heat and extent of the perſecutions indeed were ſometimes abated, according to the humanity of a particular emperor, and the moderation of this or that governor. But the laws againſt the Chriſtians were never repealed till the reign of Conſtantine, who, by declaring himſelf of our religion, put an end to all the hardſhips which our fathers had for ſo many ages ſuſtained.

I. The firſt perſecution of the Chriſtians was raiſed by the emperor Nero, A. D. 65, that is, about thirty years after our Lord's death. Concerning this perſecution, we have the teſtimony of Tacitus and Suetonius, who, being both of them Roman citizens and Heathens, are witneſſes of unſuſpected credit. Tacitus is ſuppoſed to have been fifteen years old at the death of Nero, A. D. 67, and

therefore may have been an eye-witneſs of this perſecution. In the account which he gives of the burning of Rome, he ſays, the people imputed that calamity to Nero, who they imagined ſet fire to the city with an intention to have the glory of rebuilding it more magnificently, and of calling it after his own name, but that Nero laid the blame of the crime on the Chriſtians; and that, to give a more plauſible colour to his calumny, he put great numbers of them to death in the moſt cruel manner. Withal to reconcile the people to him, he was at great pains to adorn the city, beſtowed largeſſes on thoſe who had ſuffered by the fire, and offered many expiatory ſacrifices, to appeaſe the Gods. Tacitus's words are *, Annal. xv. "But neither by man's aſſiſtance, nor by the largeſſes of the emperor, nor by the expiatory ſacrifices offered to the gods, was the evil report quaſhed, but it was believed that the burning had been ordered. Wherefore, to deſtroy this rumour altogether, Nero furniſhed criminals, and puniſhed with the moſt exquiſite ſufferings, thoſe whom the vulgar call Chriſtians, and who are hated on account of their crimes. The author of that ſect was Chriſt, who in the reign of Tiberius was puniſhed with death by the procuraror Pontius Pilate. But the peſtilent ſuperſtition, which for the preſent was ſuppreſſed, brake out afreſh, not only in Judea where the evil had firſt began, but in the city alſo, whither from every quarter all things atrocious and ſhameful flow in, and are performed. Firſt then, thoſe who confeſſed were apprehended; next, by their information, A VAST MULTITUDE, who were convicted not ſo much of the crime of the burning, as of the hatred of mankind. Theſe were made a ſport of in their death, being covered with the ſkins of wild beaſts, that they might be torn to pieces of dogs, or nailed to croſſes, or covered with inflammable matter, and when the day-light failed, they were burnt to give light at night. For theſe ſpectacles Nero gave his gardens, and at the ſame time exhibited there the Circenſian games, mixing with the multitude in the habit of a charioteer, or driving about in the courſe. Hence even towards the criminals and thoſe who merited the ſevereſt tortures, commiſeration aroſe, as towards perſons periſhing not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of one man."——The teſtimony which Suetonius bears to this perſecution is in the following words, Nero, cap. 16. "Affecti

* "Sed nou ope humana, non largitionibus principis, aut deûm placamentis decidebat "infamia, quin juſſum incendium. Ergo abolendo rumori, Nero ſubdedit reos, et quæ"ſitiſſimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invifos, vulgus Chriſtianos appellabant. Auctor "nominis ejus Chriſtus qui Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum ſup"plicio affectus erat. Repreſſique in preſens exitiabilis ſuperſtitio rurſus erumpebat, non "modo per Judæam, originem mali, ſed per urbem etiam: quo cuncta undique atrocia aut "pudenda confluunt, celebranturque. Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio "eorum multitudo ingens, haut perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis "convicti ſunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum "interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defeciſſet dies in uſum nocturni "luminis urerentur. Hortos ſuos ei ſpectaculo Nero obtulerat, et Circenſe ludicrum edi"bat, habitu aurigæ permixtus plebi, vel circulo inſiſtens. Unde quanquam adverſus "ſontes et novitſima exempla meritos miſeratio oriebatur, tanquam non utilitate publica, "ſed in ſævit am unius abſumerentur."

"ſup-

" ſuppliciis Chriſtiani, genus hominum ſuperſtitionis novæ ac ma-
" leficæ;" i. e. " The Chriſtians too were puniſhed with death, a
" ſort of people addicted to a new and miſchievous ſuperſtition."

From the above teſtimonies it appears, 1. That in Nero's reign the Chriſtian religion had made great progreſs, that its profeſſors were very numerous in the city itſelf, and that many of them ſuffered in this firſt perſecution. For Tacitus aſſures us, that there was a great multitude of them (INGENS MULTITUDO) put to death, contrary expreſsly to Mr. Voltaire, who from his own imagination aſſerts, that " a few poor wretches only were ſacrificed to the public " vengeance." And though, at firſt, the diſciples of Jeſus were confounded with thoſe of Moſes, for reaſons afterwards to be mentioned (p. 214), yet the learned Heathens ſoon came to diſtinguiſh them. Accordingly, in the paſſages quoted above, the two hiſtorians not only give the Chriſtians their proper name, but they mention their religion as a thing altogether new. They underſtood it therefore to be different from Judaiſm, which they knew was an antient religion, being well acquainted with it by reaſon of their commerce with the Jews. In particular, Tacitus had ſo diſtinct a knowlege of Chriſtianity, that he was able to tell the name of its author, the time and place where he lived, and the manner in which he died. ——2. Both Tacitus and Suetonius call the Chriſtian religion a miſchievous ſuperſtition; and the former tells us expreſsly, that the profeſſors thereof were univerſally hated for their crimes. Now conſidering the excellency of our religion, and the ſanctity of the firſt Chriſtians, theſe characters may ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange. Yet when we remember that the Goſpel required all men every where to turn from the worſhip of idols to ſerve the living God, and that the firſt Chriſtians were profeſſed enemies of the reigning ſuperſtitions, our wonder will ceaſe, and we ſhall be ſenſible that in the judgment of all who thought ſuperficially, whether in high or low life, they could not fail being conſidered as Atheiſts, and being loaded with infamy on that account. Mankind ſtanding thus affected towards them every where, how could Mr. Voltaire, in flat contradiction to common ſenſe, from the indulgence which was granted to the Jews, infer that " the Chriſtians had liberty to ex-
" tend their religion in private?"——3. It is worthy of notice, that Tacitus repreſents Chriſt as put to death on account of the new religion which he gave out; for he ſays expreſsly, that the Chriſtian " ſuperſtitions, being for the preſent ſuppreſſed" by the puniſhment of its author, " broke out afreſh, not only in Judea
" where the evil began, but in the city alſo." The ſame thing Lucian teſtifies, ſtill more directly, in the paſſage " De morte pere-
" grini" already quoted, B. II. C. IV. § 2. art. II. pag. 326. Theſe are notable teſtimonies of our Lord's innocence. He ſuffered the puniſhment of a malefactor; but it was for no crime. To uſe the words of Lucian, " He was crucified in Palæſtine, for having
" introduced the Chriſtian ſect." The hiſtory of Jeſus muſt have been well known, when the Heathens themſelves were able to give

an account of his death so conformable to truth.——4. What Tacitus has testified concerning the cause of the sufferings of the Christians under Nero, deserves particular notice likewise. He tells us they "were convicted, not so much of the crime of the burning, as "of the hatred of mankind." Their hatred therefore of mankind was the cime for which they were punished. What else could this be but their religion? Their innocence in other respects was admirable, and their love of mankind noble and disinterested. But they opposed the worship of the Gods falsely so named; they shewed the folly and impiety of the established rites; and they exhoted all men to turn from these vanities. This by the bigots would be considered as downright Atheism; than which no greater injury can be offered to mankind. Wherefore, when Tacitus tells us, that the Christians were punished for "their hatred of mankind," he in fact testifies that they were persecuted for their religion. If any doubt is entertained of this fact, Suetonius's testimony will remove it. He says expressly, that "the Christiaans were punished with "death being a sort of men addicted to a new and mischievous su-"perstition." The general manner in which Suetonius has represented this matter, affords room for suspecting that not the Christians of the city only, but that many others also were thus punished. The persecution diffused itself widely. Some antient inscriptions found in Spain prove this. It is true, Mr. Voltaire considers them as doubtful, and endeavours to put a false colouring upon them. Yet, even according to his own account, they remain illustrious monuments of the persecutions, which the first Christians underwent so early as in the reign of Nero. His words are, Essay, &c. p 61. "If it be true that in Spain they have found inscriptions, in which "Nero is thanked 'for having abolished a new superstition in that "province,' the antiquity of these inscriptions is strongly suspected. "But, even supposing them authentic, Christianity is not mentioned. "And, after all, if those contumelious expressions were levelled against "the Christians, must we not impute them to the Jews settled at "that time in Spain, who were jealous of the Christians, and ab-"horred their religion as a domestick and inveterate enemy?" Farther, the pretence on which the Christians were punished, shews that their sufferings at this time must have been general. The burning of the city was imputed to them; not directly however, but by consequence; just as in after-times all the calamities which befell the empire by the inroads of the barbarous nations, by famine or by pestilence, were imputed to the prevalence of Christianity. The Christians were reckoned Atheists. They contemned the worship of the Gods, they spread their pernicious principles, and the people were drawn away from the established religion. The Christians therefore were enemies of mankind, the Gods were incensed, and the city was burnt because the rulers tolerated such impieties. To this agree all the circumstances of the history. Expiatory sacrifices were offered by the emperor, to appease the Gods who had brought on the calamity; and the Christians, who by their impieties had

had provoked them, were ſought after to be puniſhed. "Some "were apprehended, who confeſſed," not the burning of the city, for Tacitus himſelf tells us, that was Nero's work. But they confeſſed their being Chriſtians, and they gave information concerning their brethren. Upon this, a prodigious number of the ſect was ſeized. And theſe "were convicted, not ſo much of the crime of "the burning, as of their hatred of mankind," that is, of their being Chriſtians *.——5. The ſeverity of the puniſhments, which on this occaſion the Chriſtians underwent for their religion, muſt not be overlooked. They were not only put to death in the moſt cruel manner, but they were inſulted in the agonies of death: 'Et "pereuntibus addita ludibria." To make diverſion for the people, they were ſewed in the ſkins of wild beaſts, and torn to pieces by dogs, they were hanged on croſſes, the puniſhment which the Romans inflicted on their ſlaves; they were covered over with inflammable matter, and, when the day-light failed, had fire ſet to them, that by their burning they might give light in the night-time, ſupplying the place of torches in the more frequented parts of the city, and in the emperor's gardens, where the Circenſian games were celebrated on the occaſion.

That the Chriſtians were expoſed to ſufferings every where on account of their religion, even before Nero puniſhed them, we learn from Epictetus, who lived at Rome in the Reign of Nero. For this philoſopher, Ap. Arrian. lib. 4. c. 7. alludes to the perſecutions which he obſerved the Chriſtians to ſuffer in his time, when he ſpeaks of it as a matter of cuſtom, or of madneſs among the Galileans, to neglect their eſtates, their bodies, their wives, and their children.——Upon the whole, having ſuch authentic teſtimonies, ſhewing the dreadful opinion which the heathens entertained of the Chriſtian religion, and declaring what evils the firſt Chriſtians underwent on that account, Mr. Voltaire ought not to have affirmed, as he has done, "that the Chriſtians were not moleſted by any of "the emperors till the reign of Domitian," and that their ſufferings under Nero "had nothing at all to do with their reli-"gion, which was not ſo much as known, and which the Ro-"mans confounded with Judaiſm, then under the protection of "the laws."

11. The ſecond perſecution of the Chriſtians happened under Domitian, about the 55th year after our Lord's aſcenſion, A. D. 90. During this perſecution, Flavius Clemens the conſul, a near relation of the emperor, was put to death even in the time of his conſulſhip. His wife Flavia Domitilla, nearly related as well as her huſband to Domitian, was baniſhed. Glabrio likewiſe, a perſon of conſular dignity, was capitally puniſhed, with many others whoſe

* The particulars above-mentioned give probability to Lactantius's account of this perſecution, De Mortib. perſecut. cap. 2. "When Nero obſerved that not only at Rome, but "every where elſe, great multitudes daily forſook the worſhip of idols, and went over to "the new religion, condemning the old, being an execrable and pernicious tyrant, he "leaped forth to demoliſh the heavenly temple, and to deſtroy juſtice. So, firſt of all, per-"ſecuting the ſervants of God, he crucified Peter, and ſlew Paul."

names have periſhed. For theſe facts we have the teſtimony of Dion Caſſius, preſerved by Xiphilin, Domitiano. His words are, "And in the ſame year, beſides many others, he (Domitian) put "to death, Flavius Clemens the conſul, altho' he was his couſin (ανεψιον patruelis), and had to wife Flavia Domitilla, who was her- "ſelf alſo his kinſwoman. The accuſation brought againſt both "was that of Atheiſm, (αθεοτητος): For which alſo many others "were puniſhed, who had turned aſide to the Jewiſh inſtitutions, "(Ιουδαικων εθων," ſo the vulgar called Chriſtianity). "Some of them "were put to death, others were deprived of their eſtates, but Do- "mitilla was only baniſhed to Pandeteria. Glabrio alſo, who had "governed as conſul with Trajan, being accuſed of like crimes "with the reſt, as well as of other offences, he ordered to be put "to death, after he had fought with wild beaſts." To underſtand this paſſage, we muſt remember that for a while the ignorant confounded the Chriſtian with the Jewiſh religion, becauſe both the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity and the firſt converts to it, even in the Heathen countries, were of that nation. The Heathens confounded the two religions together, for this reaſon likewiſe, that the Jews and Chriſtians agrred in their oppoſition to Polytheiſm and idolatry. Moreover, as the profeſſors of Judaiſm offered no ſacrifices but in the temple of Jeruſalem, all of them who lived among the Heathens agreed with the Chriſtians in this other point, that ſacrifices made no part or their worſhip. Wherefore, when the vulgar, who univerſally conſidered ſacrifice as the moſt eſſential part of the worſhip of God, found that the Jews and Chriſtians denied the exiſtence of the Gods commonly worſhiped, and that, while they obſtinately refuſed all ſociety with them in their ſacrifices, they had none of their own, they could not avoid looking upon them as Atheiſts guilty of the moſt atrocious crimes. Hence Atheiſt and Jew or Chriſtian were terms ſynonymous. This is the reaſon why, in the paſſage above quoted, many are ſaid to have been puniſhed as Atheiſts, who had gone over to the Jewiſh religion; ſo they termed Chriſtianity, on account of its conformity with Judaiſm in the two great articles above mentioned, which made ſuch an impreſſion upon the Heathens. Their embracing the Chriſtian religion, therefore, was the crime for which Domitian puniſhed Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla, though both of them were his relations; the crime alſo for which he puniſhed Glabrio and the reſt. This defection he and his counſellor conſidered as downwright Atheiſm; and, being perſuaded that the fate of the ſtate was intimately connected with religion, he was ſo enraged, that, deaf to the voice of nature and friendſhip, he thought he could not too ſeverely puniſh ſuch deteſtable crimes. And as in theſe inſtances he was reſtrained neither by the dignity of the perſons, nor by the ties of blood, we may be ſure, no favour was ſhewed to any others guilty of the like offences. It is therefore reaſonable to believe, that as this perſecu-

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tion was moſt cruel, ſo it was general. We have one trace of it in the Chriſtian records. The evangeliſt John, Rev. i. 9. writing to all who believed in Jeſus every where, calls himſelf their "brother "and companion in tribulation:" and tells them, that he was baniſhed to "the iſle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the "teſtimony of Jeſus." For that theſe tribulations befell the Chriſtians, and this baniſhment happened to John in the reign of Domitian, is probable, becauſe that date agrees more perfectly to John's age than any other.

The profeſſors of Chriſtianity being univerſally looked upon as Atheiſts, and ſuffering the puniſhment by law due to ſuch, it is little wonder that the worſt of crimes were imputed to them by the antient Heathens, who were wholly ignorant both of their character, and of the nature of the religion which they profeſſed. Wherefore, Chriſtianity and its diſciples lying under theſe aſperſions, it need give us no pain at all, now that we underſtand the true ſtate of the caſe, to find the antient apologiſts vindicating both from the charge of Atheiſm, profanity, and debauchery, which was thus ignorantly levelled againſt them.

III. The third perſecution began in the third year of Trajan's reign, about the 65th year after our Lord's aſcention, A. D. 100. There were now ſevere laws made againſt *hetæriæ* or illegal ſocieties. Of this kind were reckoned all colleges, corporations, and aſſociations, which were not eſtabliſhed either by the conſtitution of the emperors, or by the decree of the ſenate. Where theſe legal bonds were wanting, the ſociety was ſuppoſed to be knit together purely by friendſhip (ἑταιρια). And as this principle naturally leads men to enter deeply into one anothers's views, ſocieties founded thereon were regarded with an evil eye by the ſtate, and conſidered as nurſeries of ſedition. They were therefore prohibited by law, and the members of them were deemed guilty of treaſon. But the Chriſtians being ſo unlucky as to fall very early under general diſpleaſure, on account of their oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed worſhip of the countries where they lived, the governors of the provinces about this time haraſſed them exceedingly, on pretence of their holding *hetæriæ*; ſo that a ſharp perſecution broke out againſt them in moſt parts of the empire, and many of them fell by the rage of popular fury, as well as by edicts and proceſſes. This perſecution was ſo much the more grievous, that the Chriſtians ſuffered under the character of malefactors, by the appointment of an emperor famous through the whole world for his ſingular wiſdom, juſtice, and humanity. But his ſeverities againſt them proceeded from his being unacquainted with the nature of their religion, and the manner of their life. During this perſecution, the younger Pliny was proconſul of Bithynia, a province of the Roman empire on the Euxine ſea. In this remote country there were now prodigious numbers of Chriſtians, againſt whom the proconſul, by the emperor's edict, was obliged to uſe all manner of ſeverity. Nevertheleſs, being a perſon of good ſenſe and

moderation, he thought it prudent not to proceed to the higheſt rigors of law, till he had repreſented the caſe to Trajan himſelf, and knew his pleaſure concerning it. He therefore wrote him a letter, wherein he explained his difficulties, told him the method he had hitherto obſerved in puniſhing the Chriſtians, gave him an account of their belief, their worſhip, and their manners, according to the information he had received from ſuch Chriſtians as had apoſtatiſed to avoid perſecution; laſt of all, he begged the emperor's advice how he ſhould act towards the Chriſtians for the future. This letter is cited by Tertullian and Euſebius; and, being ſtill extant, does great honour to our religion many ways. It is the 97th of the 10th book of Pliny's letters, and is as follows *.—"Pliny to Trajan. It is "my cuſtom, Sir, to conſult you upon all things about which I "have any doubt. For who can better either reſolve my doubts, "or remove my ignorance? I never was preſent at any of the pro- "ceſſes againſt the Chriſtians. Therefore I know neither what it is "in them that uſes to be puniſhed, nor how far the inquiry con- "cerning them uſes to be carried. Moreover, I heſitated not a "little, whether there was not ſome diſtinction of ages to be "made; whether the weakeſt differ in guilt from the more robuſt; "whether pardon may be granted to the penitent; or if it ought to "be no advantage to him, who was really a Chriſtian, to have left

* Plinius Trajano.

"Solemne eſt mihi, domine, omnia, de quibus dubito, ad te referre. Quis enim poteſt "melius vel cunctationem meam regere, vel ignorantiam inſtruere? Cognitionibus de "Chriſtianis, interfui nunquam: Ideo nescio, quid, & quatenus, aut puniri ſoleat, aut "quæri. Nec mediocriter hæſitavi, ſitne aliquod diſcrimen ætatum, an quamlibet teneri "nihil a robuſtioribus differant; detur pœnitentiæ venia: An ei, qui omnino Chriſtianus "fuit, deſiſſe non prosit; nomen ipſum etiam ſi flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohærentia no- "mini puniantur. Interim in iis, qui ad me tanquam Chriſtiani deferebantur, hunc ſum "ſecutus modum. Interrogavi ipſos an eſſent Chriſtiani: Confitentes iterum ac tertio in- "terrogavi, ſupplicium minatus: Perſeverantes duci juſſi. Neque enim dubitabam, qua- "lecunque eſſet quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe & inflexibilem obſtinationem debere "puniri. Fuerunt alii ſimilis amentiæ: Quos quia cives Romani erant, adnotavi in ur- "bem remittendos: Mox ipſo tractatu, ut fieri ſolet, diffundente ſe crimine, plures ſpecies "inciderunt. Propoſitus eſt libellus ſine auctore, multorum nomina continens, qui negant "ſe eſſe Chriſtianos, aut fuiſſe; cum præeunte me deos appellarent, & imagini tuæ (quam "propter hoc juſſeram cum ſimulacris numinum afferri) thure, ac vino ſupplicarent: Præ- "terea maledicerent Chriſto; quorum nihil cogi poſſe dicuntur, qui ſunt revera Chriſtiani. "Ergo dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati, eſſe ſe Chriſtianos dixerunt: Et mox "negaverunt, fuiſſe quidem ſed deſiiſſe: Quidem ante triennium, quidem ante plures an- "nos, non nemo ante viginti quoque, omnes & imaginem tuam, deorumque ſimulacra ve- "nerati ſunt; ii & Chriſto maledixerunt. Affirmabant autem, hanc fuiſſe ſummam vel culpæ "ſuæ, vel erroris, quod eſſent ſoliti ſtato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Chriſto quaſi "Deo dicere ſecum invicem: ſeque ſacramento non in ſcelus aliquod obſtringere, ſed ne "furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depoſitum appellati "abnegarent: Quibus peractis, morem ſibi diſcedendi fuiſſe, rurſuſque coeundi ad capi- "endum cibum, promiſcuum tamen & innoxium: Quod ipſum facere deſiiſſe poſt edictum "meum, quo ſecundum mandata tua hetærias eſſe vetueram. Quo magis neceſſarium cre- "didi, ex duabus ancillis quæ miniſtræ dicebantur, quid eſſet veri & per tormenta quærere. "Nihil aliud inveni, quam ſuperſtitionem pravam & immodicam. Ideo dilata cognitione "ad conſulendum te decurri, viſa eſt enim mihi res digna conſultatione, maxime propter "periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriuſque ſexus "etiam vocantur in periculum & vocabuntur. Neque civitates tantum, ſed vicos etiam "atque agros ſuperſtitionis iſtius contagio pervagata eſt: Quæ videtur ſiſti & corrigi poſſe. "Certe ſatis conſtat, prope jam deſolata templa cœpiſſe celebrari, & ſacra ſolemnia diu in- "termiſſa repeti: Paſſimque venire victimas, quarum adhuc rariſſimus emptor inveniebatur. "Ex quo facile eſt opinari quæ turba hominum emendari poſſit, ſi fiat pœnitentiæ locus."

"off

" off being ſo: withal, whether the name itſelf, without any other
" crimes, or crimes going along with the name, ought to be puniſhed.
" In the mean time, with reſpect to thoſe who were brought be-
" fore me as Chriſtians, I obſerved this method. I aſked them,
" whether they were Chriſtians? And when they confeſſed, I aſked
" them a ſecond and a third time, threatening the puniſhment.
" Thoſe who perſevered, I ordered to be carried off. For whatever
" that might be which they confeſſed, I did not doubt that their
" contumacy and inflexible obſtinacy ought to be puniſhed. There
" were others infected with the like phrenſy, whom, becauſe they
" were Roman citizens, I ſet down as to be remitted to the city.
" The crime, as commonly happens, ſpreading itſelf by the very
" proſecution, more ſpecies thereof immediately occurred. An
" anonymous libel was given in, containing the names of many.
" Theſe denied that they were Chriſtians, or ever had been; whilſt
" at the ſame time they invoked the Gods, I repeating the form be-
" fore them, and by offering incenſe and wine worſhiped your
" image, which for this purpoſe I had ordered to be brought along
" with the ſtatues of the Gods. Moreover, they reviled Chriſt:
" none of which things, they ſay, thoſe who are really Chriſtians
" can be compelled to do. Therefore I judged they were to be diſ-
" miſſed. Others, named by an informer, ſaid they were Chriſ-
" tians, but denied it again; they had been ſo, but had left off ſome
" three years ago, ſome more years, and ſome even twenty. All
" theſe worſhiped both your image and the ſtatues of the Gods.
" Theſe alſo reviled Chriſt. They affirmed, however, that this was
" the whole of their fault or error: that they were wont on an ap-
" pointed day to meet before it was light, and to ſing with one
" another an hymn to Chriſt as a God; and to bind themſelves
" with an oath, not to any wicked thing, but to commit no thefts,
" no robberies, no adulteries, to break no promiſe, and to refuſe
" giving back no pledge when aſked. Theſe things finiſhed, it was
" their cuſtom to depart, then to meet again in order to take food,
" which however was innocent and eaten in common. But even
" this they had left off doing after my edict, whereby, according to
" your orders, I had prohibited illegal ſocieties. From this account,
" I judged it more neceſſary to ſearch out the truth, even by tor-
" ture, from two young women who were called deaconeſſes. But
" I found nothing elſe but a perverſe and immoderate ſuperſtition.
" Wherefore, deferring farther cogniſance of the matter, I have re-
" courſe to you for advice. For it ſeems to me a matter worthy of
" deliberation, chiefly becauſe of the number of thoſe who are in
" danger. For many of all ages, of every rank, and of both ſexes
" alſo, are called to account and will be called. Neither through
" the cities only, but the villages alſo and the country, is the con-
" tagion of that ſuperſtition ſpread, which it appears may yet be
" ſtopped and corrected; at leaſt it is very certain, that the almoſt
" deſolate temples are begun to be frequented, and the ſacred rites
" long neglected to be renewed. Moreover, the victims every where

" are

" are ſold, of which hitherto ſcarce any buyer was found. From " this it is eaſy to collect what a multitude of men may be reclaimed, " if there is allowed place for repentance."

From this letter, which was written about the 65th or 66th year after our Lord's aſcenſion, it appears, 1. That in leſs than the ordinary term of a man's life, Chriſtianity had made incredible progreſs, and in remote heathen countries was become the prevailing perſuaſion. In Bithynia particularly, almoſt all the inhabitants were now become Chriſtians, and the antient religion was maintained only by the influence of the prieſts and magiſtrates. To this purpoſe the following paſſage of the above letter. " It ſeems to me " a matter worthy of deliberation, chiefly becauſe of the num- " ber of thoſe who are in danger. For many of all ages, of every " rank, and of both ſexes alſo, are called to account, and will be " called. Neither through the cities only, but the villages alſo and " the country, is the contagion of that ſuperſtition ſpread." The prevalence of the Chriſtian religion appears likewiſe from the univerſal decay of the Pagan worſhip. The temples were deſerted, and the ſacrifices diſcontinued. Or if any victim happened to be offered, ſcarce any perſon would buy it. " The now almoſt deſolate tem- " ples are begun to be frequented, and the ſacred rites, long neg- " lected, to be renewed; moreover the victims every where are " ſold, of which hitherto ſcarce any buyer was found." But—2. That for which the above letter is chiefly valuable in the preſent cauſe, is the diſtinct account which it gives of the ſufferings of the Chriſtians, and of the violence where with the proſecutions againſt them were caried on. For Pliny inſinuates, that before he obtained the proconſulſhip, proceſſes againſt the Chriſtians were common every where, and puniſhment had often been inflicted upon them. " I " never was preſent at any of the proceſſes againſt the Chriſtians: " therefore I neither knew what it is in them that uſes to be puniſhed, " nor how far the inquiry concerning them uſes to be carried." Pliny's office as proconſul obliged him to preſide in the trials of the Chriſtians, as ſoon as he arrived in Bithynia: or at leaſt immediately after he had, in obedience to the emperor's orders, publiſhed the edict againſt *hetæriæ*, of which he ſpeaks towards the concluſion of his letter. Wherefore the proceſſes which he was not preſent at, muſt have been ſuch as were carried on againſt the Chriſtians by virtue of Domitian's edict, during that part of his reign which followed his edict, the reign of his ſucceſſor Nerva, and the beginning of the reign of Trajan.——3. From the various doubts, which Pliny in his letter expreſſes concerning the method of carrying on the proceſſes againſt the Chriſtians, we learn that in the period abovemedtioned theſe proceſſes had been managed with great violence and injuſtice, " Moreover, I heſitated not a little whether there " was not ſome diſtinction of ages to be made; whether the weakeſt " differ in guilt from the more robuſt; whether pardon may be " granted to the penitent; or, if it ought to be no advantage to him " who was really a Chriſtian, to have left off being ſo. Withall

" whether

"whether the name itself, without any other crimes, or crimes going "along with the name, ought to be punished." It seems, the former governors in the trials of the Christians had made no distinction of ages. The weakness of sex or understanding in the criminals had not been considered by them. Pardon had never been granted to the penitent: it was even no advantage to a man to have renounced Christianity several years before any prosecution was commenced against him. The name alone, without any other crime, had exposed every one, inevitably and without distinction, to the utmost rigors of law. The enemies of the Christians without doubt represented to the proconsul, that by these rules the processes against the Christians had been carried on formerly. What else but these representations violently urged on the one hand, and his own good sense and inclination to justice on the other, could reduce Pliny to any doubtfulness on this head. We may therefore hold it as certain, that even in their trials the Christians were greatly injured. Besides, Pliny himself tells us, that he persecuted many on an anonymous libel. So that, under this best of governors, the most virtuous citizens might be brought to a trial for their lives and fortunes, without any accuser appearing to make good the charge against them.—4. The severe methods used in detecting and punishing the Christians in former reigns, did not it seems hinder the spreading of their religion. Or it may be, by the humanity of some of the governors, the rigour of the persecution in certain provinces was relaxed. Therefore Trajan, though famed for justice and humanity, published a new edict, whereby the severities against the Christians were revived. This emperor, not sufficiently sensible of the absurdity of the commonly received worship, and being altogether ignorant of the true nature of the Christian religion, certainly imagined that he consulted the good of the state, when by persecution he endeavoured to hinder the spreading of opinions, which by all the Heathens were looked upon as no better than Atheism. In Bythynia indeed and other countries, where almost all the people of every order were Christians, we may suppose the magistrates would proceed according to law in the execution of the emperor's edict. But in countries where the abettors of the old religion were more numerous, we may believe that not only numbers were put to death by law, but that many likewise fell by the rage of popular fury, as the ecclesiastical historians informs us.—5. The most humane and equitable magistrates, who presided at the trials of the Christians, accounted their refusing to worship the Gods an unreasonable obstinacy, which without any other fault merited death. Pliny himself was of this sentiment. "Those who persevered, I ordered to be led away to "execution; for whatever that was which they confessed, I did not "doubt that their contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be "punished." If the resolution wherewith the Christians persevered in refusing to worship false Gods, was punished in this manner by one of Pliny's good sense and moderation, what favour had they to expect from governors more ignorant and brutal?

Pliny's letter, together with the informations which the emperor received from other governors of provinces, particularly from Tiberianus governor of Paleſtine, prevailed with Trajan to relax the rigor of the perſecution ſo far that he did not allow the magiſtrates as formerly to make ſearch after the Chriſtians. They were only to puniſh them when accuſed and convicted. And in trying them the rules of juſtice were to be more carefully obſerved. For this purpoſe, when he came to Antioch in his eaſtern expedition, he wrote to Pliny as follows *.—"Trajan to Pliny. You have, my "Secundus, followed the method which you ought, in diſcuſſing "the cauſes of thoſe who were delated to you as Chriſtians. Nor "indeed is it poſſible in general to determine any thing which may "have the appearance of a certain rule in this matter. Theſe men "are not to be ſearched after by you. If they are accuſed and con-"victed, they are to be puniſhed: yet ſo, that if any denies him-"ſelf to be a Chriſtian, and makes the ſame manifeſt in fact, "namely by worſhiping our Gods, although he may have been "ſuſpected formerly, let him obtain pardon on account of his re-"pentance. But anonymous libels preſented ought to have no "weight in any criminal trial, for it is a very bad precedent, and "by no means belonging to this age."

The only obſervation I ſhall make upon Trajan's anſwer to Pliny, is, that it relaxed the rigor of the perſecution but a very little. This will appear by conſidering what the emperor wrote, as an anſwer to the queſtion which Pliny propoſed to him. Pliny had aſked, how far the inquiry after the Chriſtians was to be carried? whether any diſtinction of age or ſex was to be made in their proſecution and puniſhment? whether, if any one renounced Chriſtianity, he was to be pardoned? whether the name itſelf, without any other crime, was to be puniſhed, or only ſuch crimes as were found accompanying the name? At the ſame time he told him, that he had already proſecuted many upon an anonymous libel, and propoſed, as the moſt effectual means of making the deſolated temples to be frequented, that place for repentance ſhould be allowed to the Chriſtians. In anſwer to theſe queſtions, Trajan wrote that "the "Chriſtians were not to be ſearched after," he meant by the governor and inferior magiſtrates; for he added, "That thoſe who were "accuſed and convicted of being Chriſtians were to be puniſhed. "Yet if any one ſaid he was not a Chriſtian, and proved it by "worſhiping the Gods, he was to be pardoned." Farther, the proconſul and the other magiſtrates were to pay no regard to anonymous libels in any criminal trial, becauſe it was a bad precedent,

"* Trajanus Plinio.

"Actum, quem debuiſti, mi Secunde, in excutiendis cauſis eorum, qui Chriſtiani ad te "delati fuerant, ſecutus es. Neque enim in univerſum aliquid, quod quaſi certam formam "habeat, conſtitui poteſt. Conquirendi non ſunt, ſi deferantur & arguantur puniendi ſunt; "ita tamen, ut qui negaverit ſe Chriſtianum eſſe, idque re ipſa manifeſtum fecerit, id eſt, "ſupplicando diis noſtris, quamvis ſuſpectus in præteritum fuerit, veniam ex pœnitentia "impetret. Sine auctore vero propoſiti libelli, nullo crimine locum habere debent: nam & "peſſimi exempli eſt, nec noſtri ſeculi eſt."

and

and not agreeable to the emperor's character. All theſe regulations were according to juſtice. However, they ſcreened the Chriſtians neither from proſecution nor puniſhment. For the emperor expreſsly declared it to be his pleaſure, that "if any Chriſtian was convicted, "he was to be puniſhed." And none was to be pardoned on any condition, but "his formally renouncing Chriſtianity, by openly "worſhiping idols in the court." And being ſilent with reſpect to the propoſal which Pliny had made, of puniſhing the Chriſtians only for ſuch crimes as they were found guilty of, and of diſtinguiſhing between them according to their ages, ſexes, and underſtandings, he thereby intimated that it was his pleaſure the Chriſtians ſhould "be puniſhed merely for the name without any other crime, "and that in puniſhing them no diſtinction of age or ſex or under-"ſtanding was to be made." To conclude, as the proconſul and the magiſtrates under him were obliged to proſecute the Chriſtians at the inſtance of any informer who appeared, informers were encouraged to accuſe them; and the rather that no penalty was inflicted on the informer, in caſe he did not make good his charge.—The emperor's pleaſure being thus made known, and the rules for the proſecution of the Chriſtians aſcertained, is it to be ſuppoſed that informers and proſecutors would be wanting, in countries where there were ſo many idol prieſts with their retainers, whoſe very office was annihilated, and whoſe livings were deſtroyed by the prevalence of Chriſtianity?—Thus it appears that the perſecution under Trajan muſt have been very ſevere, even after he is ſaid to have relaxed it. Accordingly we find that in this reign, Ignatius Biſhop of Antioch was carried priſoner from Syria to Rome, for being a Chriſtian. The fact he tells us himſelf, Epiſt. ad Epheſ. ſub initio. "For "hearing that I came bound from Syria for the common name and "hope, truſting through your prayers to fight with beaſts at Rome, "that ſo by ſuffering I may become indeed the diſciple of him who "gave himſelf to God an offering and ſacrifice for us, ye haſtened to "ſee me." Whiſton's tranſlation. And Euſebius informs us, that he ſuffered matryrdom in the tenth year of Trajan. Theſe things being ſo, Mr. Voltaire has done great violence to truth in numbering Trajan among the emperors who did not perſecute the Chriſtians.

IV. The fourth general perſecution began A. D. 126, in the 9th year of Adrian's reign, that is, about the 90th year after our Lord's aſcenſion, and was continued under the emperor Antoninus Pius, who ſucceeded to the empire A. D. 138.—While Adrian tarried at Athens, happening to be initiated into the Eleuſinian myſteries, he expreſſed ſuch zeal about the Heathen ſuperſtition, that many put the former edicts againſt the Chriſtians in execution. By this means, the perſecution became ſo hot, that they were obliged to remonſtrate, particularly Quadratus biſhop of Athens, and Ariſtides a philoſopher in that city, who preſented Apologies to Adrian, wherein they defended the Chriſtian religion againſt the objections of its adverſaries;

ries; and in confirmation of its divine original, ſtrenuouſly urged our Lord's miracles, particularly his curing diſeaſes, and his raiſing the dead. Theſe apologies, which are now loſt, together with letters from Serenius Granianus, repreſenting the injuſtice of the procedure againſt the Chriſtians, greatly aſſuaged the emperor's zeal, and made him write to the governors of the provinces, and particularly to Minucius Fundanus proconſul of Aſia Minor, commanding "that no Chriſtian ſhould be diſturbed on account of his religion; "and that whoſoever accuſed them without alledging any other crime "againſt them ſhould be puniſhed." Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. lib 4. c. 8, 9. —Adrian, having thus begun to entertain a favourable notion of the Chriſtians, did not ſtop here. He cauſed a great many temples to be built without images. Theſe Lampridius, a Heathen writer, tells us, he deſigned to dedicate unto Chriſt, intending to receive him among the Gods: which temples remained in Lampridius's time, and from Adrian were called Adriani. (See the paſſage quoted and tranſlated ſect. 1. of this chap. art. 8.) Of Adrian's reſcript, Juſtin Martyr, formerly a heathen philoſopher, annexed a copy to the apology which he addreſſed to the emperor Antoninus Pius, under whom the perſecution begun by Adrian was continued. For about the year of our Lord 140, that is, in the ſecond or third of Antoninus Pius, the Chriſtians began to be much harraſſed in ſeveral parts of the empire, by reaſon that the edicts of former emperors were put in execution againſt them. On this occaſion, Juſtin Martyr compoſed that which is intituled his Second Apology, but which in reality was his firſt; inſcribing it to the emperor Antoninus Pius, to his adopted ſons, to the ſenate, and to the whole people of Rome. This apology, with the copy of Adrian's reſcript annexed, and the informations ſent him from different parts of the empire, ſo impreſſed Antoninus Pius, who was naturally of a merciful diſpoſition, that he publiſhed a letter or reſcript in behalf of the Chriſtians, wherein we are told he inſinuated that they got the better of their oppoſers by laying down their lives in ſupport of their cauſe, and ordered, "that no Chriſtian, "without being guilty of a crime againſt the government, ſhould be "diſturbed." Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. 4. c. 13. But the emperor, finding that his reſcript did not reſtrain the malice of the enemies of the Chriſtians, gave an edict to be publiſhed at Epheſus in the hearing of the concil of Aſia, ordering among other things as follows: "If any ſhall ſtill proceed to create trouble to one that is a Chriſ- "tian, or to accuſe him of crimes merely becauſe he is a Chriſtian, "let him who is indicted be diſcharged tho' he is found to be a Chriſ- "tian, and let the informer himſelf undergo the puniſhment" Euſebius, Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. 4. c. 26. pag. 190. Edit. Reading. informs us, that Antoninus Pius ſent his reſcripts in favour of the Chriſtians to the following cities by name, Lariſſa, Theſſalonica, Athens, and in general through all Greece. Hence we may collect, that in theſe places more eſpecially, the Chriſtians were numerous, and the perſecutions violent.

V. The

V. The fifth perſecution began in the ſecond year of the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Philoſophus, about 128 years after our Lord's aſcenſion, A. D. 162. In the firſt year of this perſecution, Juſtin Martyr publiſhed that which is commonly called his Firſt Apology, though in reality it was his Second. In this Apology, Juſtin inſinuated that he expected Creſcens the Cynic, with whom he had been engaged in a diſpute concerning the Chriſtian religion, would ſeize him, and have him condemned to death. Euſebius ſays, Juſtin actually preſented this apology to Marcus Aurelius. But it neither ſaved his own life, nor ſtemmed the perſecution. For many ſuffered martyrdom at Rome, and among the reſt Juſtin himſelf, A. D. 164. However, the ſufferings of the Chriſtians did not become general till the ſeventh year of Antoninus's reign, A. D, 168, when the perſecution is commonly dated. The edicts againſt the Chriſtians, by which they were at this time oppreſſed, the admirers of Antoninus charge wholly upon his colleague Verus. But others with better reaſon blame Antoninus himſelf, who was prompted to perſecute the Chriſtians, by his ſuperſtitious zeal for Gentiliſm, his deſire to placate the Gods, and his anxiety to remove the great miſeries under which the empire groaned by reaſon of plagues and wars. "In the ſeventeenth year of the reign of this prince," ſays Euſebius (Eccleſ. Hiſtor. lib. 5. proem.), "the perſecution againſt us raged "with great violence in ſeveral parts of the world, thro' the enmity "of the people in the cities. What vaſt multitudes of martyrs there "were throughout the whole empire, may be well concluded from "what happened in one nation." He means France, where the perſecution was particularly violent; eſpecially at Lyons and the neighbouring country: the Chriſtians there being put to death in great numbers, and by the moſt exquiſite torments. At Lyons and Vienne they are celebrated for bearing their ſufferings with admirable conſtancy: and among the reſt Pothinus biſhop of Lyons, then about ninety years old, who, having ſuffered many indignities, died in priſon. Of the ſufferings of their martyrs, the churches of Lyons and Vienne ſent a relation to the churches of Aſia and Phrygia, the greateſt part of which letter ſtill remains, being preſerved by Euſebius in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. See B. III. C. I. ſect. 3. art. VI. ——This perſecution raged likewiſe in the oppoſite extremity of the empire. For in the year of our Lord 169, Polycarp biſhop of Smyrna was put to death. Of his martyrdom the church as Smyrna publiſhed an account, for the information and edification of other churches. This relation, having been publiſhed immediately after the matter happened, is a very antient writing. From it we learn, that many of the Chriſtians were by the proconſul's orders thrown to the wild beaſts, See B. III, C. I. ſect. 3. art. I. pag.——Celſus now lived. The ſufferings of the Chriſtians in this and the other perſecutions he beheld; for they were ſo general, that every body had an opportunity to be an eye-witneſs of them. Accordingly Celſus in two different paſſages has atteſted them. The firſt is, Apud Origen contr. Celſum, lib. 8. p. 409. "Are not theſe now ſome "of

" of your abſurdities, to wiſh and hope concerning the body, that " the very ſame ſhall be raiſed; as if nothing were better, or of more " value to you. And on the other hand, to throw the ſame body " into torments, as ſomething vile."—Ibid. pag. 423. Speaking of the temporal bleſſings which the Chriſtians expected God would beſtow on them and their proſelytes, Celſus ſays, " you ſee how much " good he has done to them and to you. To them, inſtead of be- " coming lords of the whole earth, there is not left remaining any " country or habitation. And if any one of you wanders about, " and even hides himſelf, he is ſearched out, and made to ſuffer the " puniſhment of death."—At length, Melito and Apollinaris having addreſſed the emperor Marcus Aurelius by their apologies, and many governors of provinces having wrote to him favourably of the Chriſtians, he put a ſtop to the perſecution after it had raged many years. Some are of opinion that the two reſcripts attributed by Euſebius to Antoninus Pius, and of which we have already given an account, were iſſued by Marcus Aurelius. But about this we need not anxiouſly diſputé. Certain we are, that after a while he put a ſtop to the horrid cruelties, which for ſeveral years had been exerciſed towards the Chriſtians in all parts of the empire.

VI. The ſixth perſecution happened in the reign of Severus, about 168 years after our Lord's aſcenſion, A. D. 203. While Severus was abſent in the Eaſt, his favourite Plautian, an African, who governed the city in his abſence, put many Chriſtians to death. This moved Tertullian to publiſh an apology inſcribed to the ſenate and magiſtrates of the Roman empire. About this time a variety of crimes were charged upon the Chriſtians: ſuch as, that they deſpiſed the Gods whom the emperors themſelves worſhiped, and who had raiſed the empire to ſuch a pitch of greatneſs; that by their impieties they had brought many calamities upon the world; that they worſhiped the head of an aſs, &c. In his Apology, Tertullian demonſtrated the falſehood of theſe and all the other crimes of which the Chriſtians were accuſed, and ſhewed both the ſoundneſs of their faith, and the ſanctity of their lives. The effect of this Apology was, that the perſecution was relaxed, eſpecially at the return of the emperor, who had not countenanced theſe ſeverities. However, not long after this, Severus himſelf became very cruel towards the Chriſtians. For in the 10th year of his reign, A. D. 203, he publiſhed an edict againſt us, in which the Jews likewiſe were comprehended. His pretence for perſecuting the Chriſtians was, that they were impious perſons, who deſigned nothing but rebellion againſt the ſtate. The emperor's edicts were executed with ſuch inhumanity, that the Chriſtians believed the times of Antichriſt were really come.—— Among many who fell in this perſecution, were Victor biſhop of Rome, Irenæus biſhop of Lyons in Gaul, Leonidas the father of Origen. He was beheaded at Alexandria in Ægypt. Potamiæna an illuſtrious virgin and her mother, who after various torments were deſtroyed by the flames; as was Baſilides an officer who aſſiſted at their execution.

VII. The

VII. The ſeventh perſecution was raiſed by the emperor Maximinus, about 200 years after our Lord's aſcenſion, A. D. 236. Maximinus was a perſon of a cruel diſpoſition. This he ſhowed, as by many things, ſo by his perſecution of the Chriſtians, who were obnoxious to him, chiefly becauſe they ſupported his rivals the Gordians. The biſhops and miniſters were the chief objects of Maximinus's fury; for he looked upon them as the great propagators of Chriſtianity. Theſe ſeverities cauſed Origen to write his book upon martyrdom. They were of ſhort duration, however, and not ſo violent as the former perſecutions, raging principally in the provinces where Maximinus reſided. We are told that, a little before his death, Maximinus himſelf put a ſtop to the perſecution by his reſcripts, in which were the following remarkable words: "Whereas "of a long time it hath been found, that the Chriſtians can by no "means be reclaimed from their obſtinacy, therefore the governors of "cities are hereby diſcharged from proſecuting that deſign any lon-"ger," viz. the deſign of reclaiming them by perſecution.——About this time, or perhaps a little before, Domitius Ulpianus the celebrated Roman lawyer, who flouriſhed in the beginning of the third century, collected in ſeven books all the imperial edicts, which before his time had been made againſt the Chriſtians. So Lactantius informs us, Inſtitut. Lib. v. C. 11. fine. "Domitius de of-"ficio proconſulis, libris ſeptem (other MSS. have it libro ſeptimo) "reſcripta principum nefaria collegit, ut doceret quibus pœnis affici "oporteret, eos qui ſe cultores Dei confiterentur. Domitius, in his "ſeventh book concerning the office of a proconſul, has collected "all the wicked reſcripts of the emperors, that he might teach with "what puniſhments they who profeſs themſelves the worſhipers of "God ſhould be puniſhed."

VIII. The eighth perſecution was raiſed by the emperor Decius, immediately on his obtaining the purple, A. D. 251, about 216 years after our Lord's aſcenſion. This was the ſharpeſt perſecution that had hitherto afflicted the Chriſtian church. Zealous for the cauſe of declining paganiſm, Decius with grief beheld it undermined by the progreſs of Chriſtianity, and reſolved if poſſible to deſtroy that rival worſhip. Beſides, he hated the Chriſtians, out of ſpite to his predeceſſor Philip, who was ſo great a favourer of them, that by ſome he is believed to have been a Chriſtian. The ſtorm raged violently all the time of this ſhort reign, and there was no part of the empire which did not feel its dreadful effects. The Chriſtians were every where driven from their houſes, ſtripped of their eſtates, and tormented in their bodies. The inſtruments of torture made uſe of againſt them were racks, wild beaſts, ſcalding wax, ſharp ſtakes, and burning pincers. And now, the laws of nature and humanity being utterly neglected, friend betrayed friend, and brother the brother; nay, children delivered up their parents, ſo that multitudes were ſwept away by the public executioners, and among the reſt the biſhops of the more noted cities, who, being remarkable for their ſtation and influence among the Chriſtians, were generally the firſt in all the

perſecutions who ſuffered. Cyprian, biſhop of Carthage, ſpeaking of this perſecution, ſays, "Deo cliari, domo privabantur, patrimonio "ſpoliabantur, catenis premebantur, carceribus includebantur, beſ- "tiis objiciebantur, ignibus puniebantur. God's ſaints were ba- "niſhed from their houſes, were ſtripped of their eſtates, were loaded "with chains, were ſhut up in priſons, were thrown to the wild beaſts, "were burnt alive." And Nicephorus affirms it eaſier to count the ſands of the ſea ſhore, than to reckon up all the martyrs who ſuf- fered in this perſecution. Great multitudes therefore betook them- ſelves to exile, chuſing to be expoſed to the danger of wild beaſts and famine in the deſerts, rather than truſt the mercy of men who ſeemed to have diveſted themſelves of humanity. Among the reſt, one Paul of Thebais, a youth 14 years old, withdrew into the deſerts of Ægypt, and took up his reſidence in a cavern or rock, where he lived 98 years a ſolitary life, and became the father of the Ancho- rites or Hermites, and of all ſuch as aftewards reſigned themſelves to a ſolitary mortified life *.

IX. The ninth perſecution was raiſed by the emperor Valerian, A. D. 258. about 223 years after our Lord's aſcenſion. The for- mer part of this reign was acceptable to all perſons, and among the reſt to the Chriſtians, who received many favours from the empe- ror; but, about the fourth year of his reign, Valerian was ſeduced by an Egyptian magician, who repreſented, that to render public af- fairs proſperous, nothing was more neceſſary than to ſuppreſs the Chriſtian worſhip, ſo hateful to the Gods, and to reſtore the anti- ent religion. To perſuade the emperor and his counſellors to this meaſure, was not difficult. The Roman commonwealth, they thought, had acquired its greatneſs under the protection of the Gods. They obſerved that no ſtop had been put to their conqueſts till Chriſti- anity began to prevail. In proportion to the ſpreading of their faith, the calamities of the empire had multiplied. They therefore referred the whole greatneſs of their ſtate to the favour of the Gods antiently worſhiped, and all its misfortunes to the neglect of the primitive religion, and the prevalence of Chriſtianity. By order therefore of Valerian and his ſon, the Chriſtians were inſtantly treated with the utmoſt barbarity every where. But ſo far were theſe ſeverities from having the effect which the impoſtor had promiſed, that Al- mighty God, greatly diſpleaſed with the unprovoked ſufferings of his ſervants, ſent more terrible ſcourges upon the empire from the north than ever. In theſe calamities the emperor was the principal ſufferer; for, after making ſome reſiſtance, he was obliged to turn his arms againſt Sapores king of Perſia, who before they came to a battle took

* In proceſs of time, theſe hermites came to be divided into four ſorts. Firſt, the Cœ- nobites, who lived in ſociety among themſelves, whilſt they ſeparated themſelves from all the reſt of mankind.—Secondly, the Anchorites, who, aſpiring after greater perfection, lived in abſolute ſolitude.—Thirdly, thoſe who aſſociated in ſmall companies of threes or fours, without any head.—Fourthly, thoſe who went thro' different countries on pilgrimages to viſit holy cities, or perſons of ſingular piety. There were others called *Incluſi* or Recluſes, who lived ſhut up in cells, whether in cities or in deſerts.—All theſe lived by the labour of their hands, and for the moſt part gave their goods to the poor.

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him priſoner. From this time forth Valerian was in great miſery. Sapores treated him with the utmoſt indignity, making uſe of him as a footſtool in mounting his horſe. At length, after ſeven years confinement, he made him blind, and put him to death.——Galienus, Valerian's ſon, had concurred with his father in the edicts againſt the Chriſtians. But the misfortunes of his father, the peſtilences, inundations, famines, and other calamities, which afflicted the empire in his reign, ſo wrought upon him, that, hoping to appeaſe the Divinity, he departed from the maxims of former emperors in the like circumſtances: he relaxed the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians, ſetting forth edicts in their favour.

X. The tenth perſecution was begun by the emperor Diocleſian, A. D. 303, about 267 years after our Lord's aſcenſion. Diocleſian, during the courſe of a proſperous reign, had favoured the Chriſtians for the ſpace of twenty years. But coming to the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, Cæſar Galerius, who hated the Chriſtians, prevailed on him, A. D. 303, to give orders for demoliſhing the cathedral church of Nicomedia, built oppoſite to the imperial palace. A Chriſtian publicly tore the edict, and was puniſhed. A few days after, part of Galerius's palace was conſumed by fire; and the Chriſtians were ſuppoſed to be the incendiaries. Upon this, Diocleſian publiſhed an edict, commanding the Chriſtian churches to be pulled down, their bibles to be burnt, thoſe who had obtained any office in the magiſtracy to be degraded, and the meaner ſort to be ſold as ſlaves. But theſe were only the beginnings of the perſecution: for, ſoon after, Diocleſian, with the conſent of his colleague Maximian, publiſhed an edict, ordering the Chriſtian biſhops to be bound with chains, and to be forced by all manner of torture to ſacrifice to idols. This edict was ſo rigorouſly executed, that in the ſpace of one month only, it is ſaid, ſeventeen thouſand Chriſtians were put to death, not to ſpeak of the multitudes that were baniſhed.——In the ſecond year of the perſecution, A. D. 304, the emperors Diocleſian and Maximian reſigned the purple; the former in Nicomedia, where he named Galerius his ſucceſſor; the latter at Milan, after having ſubſtituted Conſtantius Chlorus in his place. The new emperors divided the provinces between them. Conſtantius took Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Germany: Galerius had all the reſt. Galerius, finding the government of ſo many provinces too heavy for him, named as Cæſars, Maximinus, his own nephew by his ſiſter, and Severus. To Severus he gave the government of Rome, Italy, and Africa; to Maximus, that of the eaſtern provinces, reſerving to himſelf the management only of the provinces which belonged to Illyricum and Greece. Conſtantius in the Weſt relaxed the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians by his edicts; but Galerius and the Cæſars continued it in the Eaſt.—A while after this, Severus happening to be abſent from Italy, Maxentius, ſon of Maximian the former emperor, was himſelf proclaimed emperor at Rome by the ſenate and people. He relaxed the perſecution in the eighth year thereof. Severus marched againſt him; but when under the walls of Rome, being deſerted by his ſoldiers, he was taken and killed. Galerius next marched into Italy;

but his troops beginning in like manner to desert, he was obliged to return. About two years after this, Galerius falling sick, published an edict in his own name, and in that of Constantine, Constantius's son, whom he had kept as an hostage for the good behaviour of his father. In this edict he ordered, "That the Christians from thence-"forth should be spared, and their churches and meetings allowed "them:" intreating, at the same time, "That they would put up "publick prayers for the emperor." Galerius on the death of Severus had declared Licinius, Augustus, and by so doing had pointed him out as his successor. Wherefore when Galerus died, Licinius was generally acknowledged emperor. Soon after this, Constantine, who had escaped from the East, and whose father was now dead, being invited by the senate and the people into Italy, marched against Maxentius, whom they had formerly made emperor, and defeated him. After the victory, CONSTANTINE DECLARED HIMSELF A CHRISTIAN. This circumstance induced Licinius to allow the Christians in his part of the empire considerable privileges. But Maximinus Cæsar, who governed in the East as his lieutenant, thinking his station inferior to his merit, proclaimed himself emperor, and revoked the privileges which Licinius had granted to the Christians. Licinius defeated him in a great pitched battle. Upon this Maximinus allowed the Christians their former privileges, resolving to try his fortune anew. But he was cut off by death before he could execute his designs. Maximinus being now out of the way, Licinius began to alter his behaviour towards the Christians. Openly espousing the cause of heathenism, he prohibited the bishops from visiting in the houses of the Gentiles, lest in their conversation they might propagate their principles; and soon after he raised a most violent persecution against the whole church in those parts. So that, as Eusebius observes, the East and West looked like night and day, a dreadful darkness overspreading the former, while the latter enjoyed all the happy sunshine of prosperity. But Licinius's cruelty against the Christians, as well as his treacherous practices with relation to Constantine, brought that prince out of the West against him with a great army. Licinius was defeated, taken, and after some time put to death.

Constantine, being now in possession of the whole empire, put a final period to this long persecution, which as it was the last, so it was the most severe of them all, being the utmost effort of a dying enemy. It continued no less than twenty years; and the infinite multitude of Christians, who perished in it, made the persecutors imagine they had compleated their work. For in an inscription they say, they had abolished the name and superstition of the Christians, and had restored the worship of the Gods: but they were mistaken; for this persecution really hastened the destruction of Gentilism, the soldiers, who were generally Christians, supporting or deserting the emperors according as they opposed or favoured their religion. And, to say the truth, a very little attention to the history of those times, will suffice to shew that the emperors, and such as aimed at the imperial dignity, were successful in their enterprizes, according

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as they regulated their conduct towards the Christians; than which a plainer proof of the prevalency of this religion needs not be desired.—For Constantine's conversion to Christianity, we have the authority of the Heathen, as well as of the Christian historians. It is related by Zozimus, who informs us that he was the first emperor who declared himself of this religion, lib. ii. p. 102. By express laws, Constantine allowed to all men liberty of conscience; but at the same time he distguished the Christian religion with particular marks of his favour. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. x. c. 5. And whereas the first day of the week was universally observed by Christians as a festival in memory of the Resurrection of Jesus (Euseb. in vita Constantini, lib, iv. c. 18.), he commanded that on that day throughout the Roman dominions no court of justice should be opened, and no work of business of any kind be done, except that of agriculture. This law is still extant. C. lib. 3. De feriis, tit. 12.

XI. Julian, who succeeded Constantius, the son of Constantine, in the empire, did not follow the footsteps of his two predecessors. He revived Paganism, wrote in defence of it, set an example of the worship of the Gods, heroes, heavens, earth, sea, fountains, rivers: and by solicitations and bribes he endeavoured to gain proselytes. Such gentle means, Libanius tells us, "the emperor made "use of, not only from his apprehending that mens consciences can-"not be forced, but from his being sensible that the cruelties which "before his time had been exercised, had rather furthered than hin-"dered the progress of Christianity." Parental. in Julian. c. 144. We have therefore Libanius's testimony, that in the reigns before Constantine the Christians had been tortured and put to death for their religion, whereof he gives some instances, c. 58. 59. 81.—— To the same purpose we have Julian's own testimony concerning the former persecutions of the Christians: Apud Cyrill. lib. 6. p. 205. His words are, "You emulate their wrath and bitterness by "overturning their temples and altars, and you put to death," &c. (See the whole passage above, B. II. C. IV. § 2. N° 4.) Nevertheless, though Julian put no Christian to death, he persecuted them violently. So Eutropius and Ammianus Marcellinus, both of them heathen historians, assure us. The former served Julian in the expedition wherein he lost his life, and wrote an abridgement of the Roman history. In the 10th book of that abridgement, 16th chapter, speaking of Julian, he says, "Nimius religionis Christianæ "infectator, perinde tamen ut cruore abstineret. He was too great a "persecutor of the Christian religion, yet so as he abstained from "shedding of blood" The particulars we learn from Ammianus, lib. 22. p. 480. "Illud autem inclemens obruendum perenni silen-"tio, quod arcebat docere magistros rhetoricos et grammaticos ritus "Christiani cultores. But that act of cruelty ought to be buried in "perpetual silence, namely, his prohibiting such masters of rhe-"toric and grammar from teaching such as were of the Christian per-"suasion."

Upon the whole, the grievous persecutions which the disciples of Jesus were exposed to on account of their religion, from the begin-

ning, being thus atteſted by many writers, as well heathen as Chriſtian, who have likewiſe related a number of circumſtances attending them, we have the ſame evidence for theſe perſecutions, as for any hiſtorical fact whatever. Only the atteſtations concerning them, contrary to what ordinarily happens, are cleareſt and moſt authentic in behalf of the more antient perſecutions. This circumſtance merits attention, becauſe the argument for the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory, taken from the ſufferings of the Chriſtians in antient times, chiefly depends on the evils to which the witneſſes of the apoſtles miracles expoſed themſelves by receiving the goſpel hiſtory. The miracles they ſaw the Apoſtles perform, and which they were enabled to perform themſelves, left them no room to doubt of the truth of what the apoſtles reported concerning the Lord Jeſus. The evils to which they expoſed themſelves by their belief of theſe reports, and the ſufferings which they actually underwent rather than renounce this their belief, ought to convince us, that the miracles by which they were perſuaded were neither illuſions nor forgeries. But to illuſtrate this more fully ſhall be the purpoſe of the following ſection.

SECT. III.

The truth of the goſpel-hiſtory proved from the converſion of the world to Chriſtianity.

THE Chriſtian records tells us, that the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, who went about into all countries preaching the hiſtory of Jeſus, addreſſed the inhabitants of every country immediately upon their firſt arrival, being enabled ſo to do by the gift of tongues which their maſter conferred upon them. The ſame records aſſure us, that theſe men proved the truth of their reports concerning Jeſus, by performing every where many miracles, and by ſpeaking all manner of languages without having previouſly learned them. They inform us alſo of a fact ſtill more extraordinary; namely, that the apoſtles, according to their maſter's promiſe, communicated to thoſe who believed, a power of working the like miracles with themſelves, and of ſpeaking with tongues; than which a greater or more illuſtrious proof both of their own and and of their maſter's miracles, and of the truth of Chriſtianity in general, could not be wiſhed for; a proof which were it offered to the moſt obſtinate oppoſers of Chriſtianity now-a-days, they will acknowlege they could not poſſibly reſiſt.——Of the miraculous evidence wherewith the Goſpel hiſtory is ſaid in the Chriſtian records to have been attended, we have clear proofs in the letters of the Apoſtles to the particular churches. For there we find the many wonderful things which theſe men performed, in preſence of their converts, and the miraculous gifts which they had confered on them, openly appealed to, as matters univerſally known and acknowleged. For inſtance, Paul, writing to the Romans, ſays, chap. i. 11. "For I long to ſee you, that I may "impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end you may be eſta-"bliſhed."

"bliſhed."—So likewiſe to the church at Corinth: 2 Cor. xii. 12. "Truly the ſigns of an Apoſtle were wrought among you in all "patience, in ſigns and wonders and mighty deeds. 13. For what "is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches?"—And to the churches of Galatia: Gal. iii. 2. "Received ye the ſpirit by the "works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—5. He therefore "that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles "among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing "of faith?" Theſe are expreſs appeals to the miracles which Paul wrought in the preſence of his converts, and to the miraculous gifts which he beſtowed upon them. If the reader deſires farther ſatisfaction on this head, let him look into the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the Firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, which are wholly ſpent in giving directions about the exerciſe of the gifts beſtowed on that church by Paul. Nor were the miraculous gifts peculiar to the Corinthians. All the churches without exception enjoyed them; for he declares, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. that he gave to all the churches the ſame rules for the exerciſe of them. If theſe things were wholly fictitious: if the churches had ſeen no miracles performed by the Apoſtles; if they received from them no gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; would theſe men have had the impudence thus to have addreſſed their converts every where? Or though no ſuch addreſſes had been made perſonally, would the letters, which aſſerted that they actually were made, have gained the leaſt credit? A proof of this kind, which contains in it ſo many others, muſt certainly be ſuperior to all ſuſpicion. Indeed, if we ſhall treat the miracles, whereof each church was the witneſs, as fables, it is not the teſtimony of the Apoſtles alone that we reject, but the depoſitions, ſo to ſpeak, of the whole world.

But my deſign at preſent is to prove the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, and of the miraculous evidence wherewith it was accompanied by the reception which this hiſtory met with in the firſt ages. It was no ſooner preached, that Jeſus of Nazareth aroſe from the dead, than thouſands every where believed the wonderful relation; notwithſtanding by ſo doing they expoſed themſelves to all manner of perſonal ſufferings, as well as to the loſs of their goods. Now we affirm, that to entertain a belief of this kind, which drew along with it ſuch conſequences, mankind could not poſſibly have been perſuaded by any arguments inferior to thoſe above mentioned. My meaning is, the Heathens in Greece, Italy, Aſia Minor, and other countries, never would have believed the reports concerning the miracles of Jeſus, and concerning his reſurrection from the dead, unleſs the men who told them theſe things had wrought in their preſence miracles equal to thoſe which they reported of their maſter, and had communicated to their converts the power of working the like miracles. By the converſion of the world, therefore, the miracles which the Apoſtles wrought, and the miraculous powers which they beſtowed upon their converts, and of conſequence the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, is raiſed above all exception. Now, though this argument

be quite concluſive, even in the general manner wherein I have ſtated it, its importance makes it worthy of a nearer conſideration: and the rather that, as we approach, the converſion of the world ſhews itſelf a much grander object than it appeared at a diſtance. It conſiſts of a variety of parts; theſe parts are adorned with numerous circumſtances: and the whole unite in preſenting a concluſion or general view of the moſt ſtriking kind; a concluſion which cannot fail to leave a laſting impreſſion; a concluſion therefore which muſt produce ſuch a belief of the Goſpel-hiſtory as nothing can efface.

To form, however, a proper judgement of the converſion of the world and of its circumſtances, conſidered as an argument for proving the truth of the miracles of the apoſtles, and by conſequence the truth of the whole goſpel-hiſtory, the following particulars muſt be carefully weighed in the balance of unprejudiced reaſon.

1. When the Goſpel was propoſed to mankind, they were not without religion, as was the caſe when the different forms of Gentiliſm were firſt introduced. I mention this to ſhew, that the ready reception which Chriſtianity met with in all countries did not proceed from its being the firſt religion that was offered to rude and uncultivated nations; ſo that the paſſion for religion natural to the human mind, having no other object at hand, readily embraced this, and for its ſake men received the ſtrange hiſtory on which it was founded, without any examination. In every country, there was already a religion eſtabliſhed by law, patronized by the rulers, and practiſed by the people. In many places, but eſpecially in the Leſſer Aſia, Greece, and Italy, Gentiliſm was exquiſitely adapted to the taſte of the vulgar, by the magnificence of its temples and the ſplendor of the ceremonies. Judaiſm too gloried in the ſame advantages; not to mention that it in particular really enjoyed the great honour which many of the others falſely claimed, namely of being a religion from heaven. Moreover, in Heatheniſm there was nothing that could have the leaſt influence to prepare the minds of its votaries for the reception of Chriſtianity, but rather every thing to alienate them from it. For it is well known, that there was the moſt direct oppoſition between all the different forms of Heatheniſm and the Goſpel. Judaiſm indeed ought to have paved the way for the Chriſtian religion, as being the preparatory diſpenſation. Yet in fact it was otherwiſe. For the Jews, being prepoſſeſſed with the belief of the eternal obligation of the Moſaick inſtitutions, were filled with the moſt violent enmity againſt the Goſpel, which taught the abrogation of the law. It is evident therefore, from the nature of things, that the introduction of the Goſpel upon the ruins of the eſtabliſhed religion muſt in all countries have been effected in oppoſition to the ſword of the magiſtrate, the craft of prieſts, the pride of philoſophers, and the humours, paſſions, and prejudices of the people, all cloſely combined in ſupport of the national worſhip,

and

and to cruſh the Chriſtian faith, which aimed at the ſubverſion of Heatheniſm.

2. It deſerves attention, that in the converſion of the world the method, whereby abſurd ſyſtems have ſometimes been ſucceſsfully eſtabliſhed, was not uſed. For the life and doctrine of Chriſt was not a ſtory privately whiſpered among the Chriſtians themſelves, or communicated to the few who were diſpoſed to be of their party. It was not propagated in the dark, by people who ſtole about from houſe to houſe, with an intention to deceive the credulous. It was not delivered out in parcels, ſo as to make one doctrine pave the way for another. It did not inſinuate itſelf into the belief of mankind, by ſlow and inſenſible ſteps. Theſe indeed were the arts whereby the Romiſh faith crept into the world, which, if it had been offered openly and all at once, would have been rejected with abhorrence as monſtrous. Inſtead of this, the hiſtory of Jeſus and the moſt offenſive doctrines of Chriſtianity were preached publicly, firſt in Jeruſalem, the ſcene of theſe wonderful tranſactions, in the ſynagogues there, in the temple itſelf, nay, before the Jewiſh Sanhedrim. Next it was preached through all the Heathen countries. At thoſe ſermons any one who had a mind might be preſent. The hiſtory and doctrines above mentioned were propoſed in their true native original colours, without any diſguiſe or ſoftening; as is evident from the ſermons of the Apoſtles ſtill on record. They were propoſed all at once; I mean the great and eſſential articles of the Goſpel, which, however diſagreeable they might be to mens natural turn of thinking or to their paſſions, were delivered by the Apoſtles with the greateſt openneſs in every ſermon. If the ſermons we appeal to, as examples of the Apoſtles manner of preaching, are thought not to have been publicly delivered, their being recorded in the Acts of the Apoſtles is of equal importance in the preſent argument; ſeeing that writing came abroad while the Apoſtles were alive. But why do we inſiſt on this ſort of proof? The Goſpels and Epiſtles, containing the whole of Chriſtianity, were publiſhed in the firſt age, were offered to the world entire as we have them at preſent, were quickly diſperſed into many countries; and in no ſubſequent age has any doctrine or matter of fact been univerſally received, as an eſſential part of Chriſtianity, which is not plainly contained in thoſe writings. It is therefore indubitable, that all, who antiently embraced Chriſtianity, had opportunity to examine the whole ſcheme before they formed any reſolution of becoming the diſci- of Jeſus. No one was cheated into this belief by any artful dealing of the firſt preachers of the Goſpel.

3, There is a third circumſtance, which with judicious perſons will render the converſion of the world to Chriſtianity a moſt ſtriking proof of our Lord's hiſtory, and that is, the belief of the doctrine and miracles of Jeſus, which in ſo ſhort a time became general through the world, began in the country which had been the ſcene of his miniſtry, and particularly in the capital city thereof, where he had been publicly tried, condemned, and put to death, by the

the ſenate of Iſrael as a deceiver. For, on the 50th day after his crucifixion, there were no leſs than three thouſand converted in Jeruſalem, by a ſingle ſermon of one of the Apoſtles, wherein he inſiſted upon the miracles performed by Jeſus as things known to all preſent (Acts ii. 41), a topic which the Apoſtles in every ſermon failed not to urge. See Acts x. 38. A few weeks after this, 5000 who believed are ſaid to have been preſent at another ſermon preached in Jeruſalem by ſame Apoſtle, Acts iv. 4.—In the ſecond year after our Lord's aſcenſion, "the number of the diſciples multiplied "greatly, and a great company of the prieſts," the moſt violent enemies of this novel religion, "became obedient to the faith," Acts vi. 7.—In the third year they multiplied ſo exceedingly, that "there was a great perſecution againſt the church which was at Je-"ruſalem, and they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the region "of Judea and Samaria, except the Apoſtles," Acts viii. 1.—In the third or fourth year, the ſpreading of the Chriſtian faith was ſo remarkable, even in the remoteſt provinces of Paleſtine, that the high prieſt and council of Jeruſalem, in order to put a ſtop to it, ſent forth perſecutors as far as Damaſcus. Of theſe, the ring-leader was a zealous young man named Saul, who in this very journey was converted by Jeſus appearing to him at noon-day; ſo that he became forthwith an earneſt preacher of the faith which he was going to deſtroy. Acts ix. 1—20.—About eight or ten years after our Lord's death, the diſciples were grown ſo numerous in Jeruſalem and the country about, that they became the object of the jealouſy of Herod himſelf. For, at the inſtigation of the chief prieſts, he carried on the perſecution againſt them, by putting to death one of the Apoſtles, and by impriſoning another, whom he intended likewiſe to ſlay, Acts xii. 1.—In the twenty-ſecond year after the crucifixion, the diſciples in Judea are ſaid to have been many myriads, Acts xxi. 20. Θεωρεις αδελφε, ποσαι μυριαδες εισιν Ιουδαιων των πεπιστευκοτων. In this manner did the converſion of the Jews advance in their own country; than which a nobler proof of the truth of the Goſpels, as books of hiſtory, cannot be deſired. For if the things therein told had been falſe, would ſuch numbers, upon the ſpot where they were ſaid to be done, and at the very time too in which they happened, have given ſuch credit to them, as on their account to have expoſed themſelves to the moſt grievous perſecution?

4. The ſucceſs of the Goſpel, however, was by no means confined to Judea. Being preached in all the different provinces of the Roman empire, numbers of the Heathens, as well as of the Jews, believed. It ſeems, the evidence accompanying our Lord's miracles was ſo ſtrong, that it failed not to make an impreſſion upon the minds of thoſe to whom it was propoſed, whatſoever nation they were of.—The converſion of the Gentiles is ſo much the more remarkable, that almoſt the very firſt triumphs of the Chriſtian religion were in the heart of Greece itſelf, the nurſery of learning and the polite hearts, for churches were very early planted at Corinth, at Epheſus, at Berœa, at Theſſalonica, at Philippi, as is plain from

the hiſtory of the Acts, and from Paul's Epiſtles ſtill remaining directed to churches in moſt of thoſe cities. Even Rome herſelf, the ſeat of wealth and empire, was not able to reſiſt the force of truth; many of her inhabitants embracing the Chriſtian faith ſo early as in the reigns of Claudius and Nero, and but a few years after our Lord's crucifixion, when the matters told them concerning him were recent, and it was eaſy to have diſproved them, if they had been falſe, by many witneſſes from Judea both Jews and Gentiles, who continually reſorted to Rome either for buſineſs or pleaſure, and by the conſtant communication which ſubſiſted between the capital and all the provinces of the empire.

5. The converſions produced by the ſermons of the Apoſtles, happened in an age juſtly celebrated for the heighth to which learning and the polite arts were carried by the Greeks and Romans, the renowned maſters of the ſciences. The nations of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, heretofore barbarous, were at this time remarkably civilized. In moſt countries knowledge was farther diffuſed and more univerſal than it had been in any former period. In ſhort, it muſt be acknowledged, that there never was a more learned, more philoſophical, or more diſcerning age, than that in which the Chriſtian religion was propoſed to mankind. Beſides, the world under the protection of the Roman government enjoying then eſpecially profound peace, men of a ſpeculative turn were every where at leiſure to examine the matter with care. And as the different nations of the world were now united in one great empire, they had eaſy communication with one another, and with the city of Rome, the centre of intelligence and correſpondence. So that every ſenſible perſon, who would take the trouble, had aceeſs to inform himſelf of the things ſaid to have been tranſacted in any part of the empire. It is therefore undeniable, that, when the Goſpel was firſt propoſed, all ranks of men in all countries were as well ſecured as poſſible from being impoſed upon by falſe pretences of any kind. This circumſtance renders the converſion of the world, notwithſtanding it began with that of the common people, a ſtrong preſumption of the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory.

6. Though, in the eyes of human wiſdom, the mean condition of the generality of the firſt converts may ſeem diſhonourable to the Chriſtian cauſe, in reality it adds great weight to the evidence of the Goſpel-hiſtory. Accordingly, Jeſus himſelf rejoiced in it, and more than once ſolemnly returned thanks for it. Luke x. 21. "At "that time Jeſus rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Fa- "ther, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things "from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: "Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight." The Apoſtle Paul likewiſe gloried in the mean condition of the firſt converts. 1 Cor. i. 26. "You ſee your calling, Brethren, how that "not many wiſe men after the fleſh are called.—But God has choſen "the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God "has choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things

"which

"which are mighty; and baſe things of the world, and things "which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and things which are "not, to bring to nought things that are: that no fleſh ſhould glory "in his preſence." Our Lord and his Apoſtles thus rejoiced in the converſion of the common people, upon the firſt publication of the Goſpel, becauſe they knew this circumſtance above all others would prove the truth of their miracles, and render the doctrines and facts, for the confirmation of which they performed them, highly credible in all ſucceeding ages. It is well known, that the bulk of mankind are incapable of comprehending any long train of reaſoning, and therefore in vain are they perſuaded to relinquiſh the opinions in which they have been educated, by ſuch arguments, however juſt and concluſive they may be. Proofs addreſſed to their ſenſes are what ſtrike them moſt. Hence no arguments ſo efficacious for impreſſing the minds of the populace, as great and evident miracles. Theſe alone have force to make them lay aſide religious notions early imbibed, or counteract their ſtrongeſt inclinations. Nor, in fact, has any other evidence ever been found ſufficient to change mens opinions and practices in theſe particulars. Wherefore, ſeeing the common people were converted immediately on the firſt publication of the Goſpel-hiſtory, without being influenced by the previous converſion of the great men, it is a ſhining proof of the truth of the miracles which the firſt preachers of the Goſpel are ſaid to have performed, in confirmation of their ſermons: becauſe, by mere reaſoning, the vulgar never could have been brought, in any conſiderable number, to forſake their native religions. And we may believe the wiſdom of God ordained their converſion to precede that of their rulers, on purpoſe to give credibility in after-times to the miracles which from the beginning were wrought in ſupport of the Chriſtian cauſe. Perhaps likewiſe, in ordering the converſion of the common people to precede that of their rulers, God intended to manifeſt his juſtice and goodneſs, as well as his wiſdom. For as they had been at firſt ſeduced, and were all along upheld in their ſuperſtition by the policy of their governors, it was both juſt and good in God, early to put them in the way of gaining the happineſs of immortality. Accordingly theſe men, having hitherto lived in deplorable ignorance of God, every where joyfully embraced the doctrines of the Goſpel, which enlightened and comforted them under the manifold afflictions of this life: and ſo being drawn off in great numbers from Gentiliſm, that horrid ſuperſtructure of impiety and folly, which the ſtateſmen in all countries had reared on the foundation of the credulity of the multitude, fell to the ground at once, and by its fall aſtoniſhed the rulers themſelves, who could no longer reſiſt the evidence and influence of truth.

7. But though the generality of the firſt converts to Chriſtianity in all countries were people in the middle and lower ſtations of life, it ought not to be forgotten that from the very beginning there were not wanting ſome of the better ſort every where, whoſe converſion

verſion added both luſtre and dignity to the Goſpel triumphs. Thus, among the firſt converts of the Jewiſh nation, we find perſons of no leſs rank than Nicodemus, and Joſeph of Arimathea, noblemen and members of the ſenate of Iſrael; Jairus, a ruler of the ſynagogue that was at Capernaum, a nobleman living in the ſame town, whoſe ſon Jeſus recovered out of a fever; Manaen, Herod the Tetrarch's foſter-brother; Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's ſteward; Zaccheus, chief of the publicans at Jerico; Mary Magdalene, a woman of note; Apollos, remarkable for eloquence; Paul, learned in the Jewiſh law; together with many of the chief rulers, who did not confeſs him becauſe of the Phariſees (John xii. 42.); and a great company of the prieſts in Jeruſalem, who became obedient to the faith (Acts vi. 7.), and whoſe office and literature rendered them conſpicuous.—Among the Gentile converts we find no leſs a perſon than a Roman proconſul, Sergius Paulus by name, who governed the inland of Cyprus at the time of his converſion, and in honour of whom it is thought the Apoſtle, who converted him, took the name of Paul. At Epheſus, certain of the aſiarchs or magiſtrates are ſaid to have been Paul's friends, having no doubt conceived a good opinion of the cauſe wherein he was engaged. Cornelius likewiſe, a Roman captain of great reputation for virtue, was an early diſciple of Jeſus. Dionyſius too, a judge and ſenator of the Areopagus at Athens: Damaris, and others of note, in the ſame city. Eraſtus, treaſurer of Corinth; Tyrannus, a teacher of grammar and rhetoric in Corinth; Publius, a nobleman, and probably the governor of the iſland of Malta; Philemon, a man of conſiderable quality at Coloſſe; Simon, a magician in Samaria; Zenas, a lawyer; nay, and the domeſtics of the emperor himſelf; all of them perſons whoſe education qualified them to judge of an affair of this kind, and whoſe office and ſtation rendered them conſpicuous in the countries where they lived. The above are all mentioned in the ſacred records of the Chriſtians. But there may have been, and no doubt were, others of the like ſtation converted, whoſe names are not taken notice of there. Even the Heathen hiſtorians mention ſome perſons of great note who were early converted; for inſtance, Flavius Clemens, the conſul, with his wife Domitilla, both of them relations of the emperor Domitian; M. Acilius Glabrio likewiſe, who was conſul at Rome with Trajan. Moreover, we know that many of the Heathen philoſophers were among the firſt diſciples; ſuch as Juſtin Martyr, who, even after his converſion, continued the habit and profeſſion of philoſophy; Quadratus, Ariſtides and Athenagoras, philoſophers of Athens; and in Alexandria Dionyſius, Clemens, Ammonius, Arnobius, and Anatolius. In proceſs of time, it was not a ſingle perſon of figure in this city, or in that nation, who obeyed the Goſpel, but multitudes of the wiſe, the learned, the noble, and the mighty in every country. Theſe, being all fully convinced of the truth of our Lord's pretenſions, and impreſſed with the deepeſt ſenſe of his dignity, gave the moſt ſolid evidence of their conviction, both by their worſhiping

him

him as God, notwithſtanding he had been puniſhed with the ignominious death of a malefactor, and by making public profeſſion of his religion, although they had been educated in the belief of other religions far more agreeable to the corrupt inclinations of the human heart, to deſert which they had not the ſmalleſt temptation from honour or intereſt. On the contrary, by becoming Chriſtians they expoſed themſelves to all manner of ſufferings in their perſons, their reputations, and their fortunes.

8. This leads me to a conſideration which adds weight to all the reſt, and which therefore merits particular attention; namely, that the belief of Chriſtianity was followed with no worldly advantage whatever, by which men could be ſwayed to renounce their native religions, and embrace a form of worſhip ſo different from every thing that was then practiſed. On the contrary, by becoming Chriſtians the Heathens denied themſelves many ſenſual gratifications, which their own religions indulged them in; particularly fornication and drunkenneſs, which they conſidered as branches of the worſhip of God. Alſo, by becoming Chriſtians, theſe men ſubjected themſelves to a courſe of life rigid and ſevere, very different from that to which they had been accuſtomed, and which is ſo agreeable to the fleſh. For at their baptiſm they bound themſelves to renounce the world with its pleaſures, as a ſacrifice neceſſary in ſuch times of perſecution, and to mortify the ſtrongeſt inclinations of their nature. By renouncing their religion, the Heathens likewiſe loſt the affection of their relations, who perſiſted in their antient errors; they ſeparated themſelves from their acquaintance, particularly in their ſacred ſolemnities; which would be the more grievous to them, as theſe were of a nature fit to ſtrike their imagination and engage their paſſions, much more than any thing of that ſort among us. In ſhort, by the profeſſion of Chriſtianity they denied themſelves all thoſe ſenſual pleaſures which in every country are derived from the concurrence and ſuffrage of the community, and to which a reliſh is given by the joint participation of friends. Yea, they even loſt moſt of the private and ſocial ſatisfactions of life; having quite eſtranged themſelves from their friends, and baniſhed themſelves from their families.—Nor was this all; by embracing our faith the Heathens expoſed themſelves to more terrible evils ſtill. From the very beginning, the profeſſion of Chriſtianity was attended with the continual hazard of all manner of perſonal ſufferings; and in proportion as this religion ſpread itſelf, the evils which followed the profeſſion of it multiplied. For it is well known, that the Chriſtians were not only ſoon excluded from all public offices and honours, but they were inſulted and abuſed by the rabble, who looked upon them as Epicureans, Atheiſts, and the moſt flagitious of men, and as ſuch often executed puniſhment upon them with their own hands. By the magiſtrates they were ſubjected to heavy fines, their goods were confiſcated, they were made to ſuffer a variety of ignominious puniſhments, which to generous minds are more grievous than death. They were impriſoned and proſcribed, they

they were baniſhed, they were condemned to work in the mines, they were made to fight with wild beaſts in the theatres for the diverſion of the people (1 Cor. xv. 32), they were put to the torture, they were placed in red-hot iron chairs, they were crucified, impaled, burnt alive; in a word, they were made to undergo all the torments which cruelty and barbarity inflamed by rage could invent; torments the bare mention of which excites horror in the human mind. Now all theſe being things moſt grievous to nature, it follows that whatever was the cauſe of them, would be received with the utmoſt reluctance and difficulty. Wherefore nothing but overbearing evidence, evidence ſuch as they could not by any means reſiſt, was able to make men in thoſe circumſtances acknowledge the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, and receive a religion founded thereon, which plunged them into ſuch terrible misfortunes.

9. But the ſufferings of the firſt Chriſtians may be viewed likewiſe in the light wherin Mr. Addiſon has placed them; namely, as a ſtanding miracle for proving the truth of Chriſtianity. "Treatiſe "of the Chriſtian religion," § vii. 4. "Under this head I cannot "omit that which appears to me a ſtanding miracle in the three firſt "centuries, I mean that amazing and ſupernatural courage or pa"tience, which was ſhewn by innumerable multitudes of martyrs, "in thoſe ſlow and painful torments that were inflicted on them. "I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair at "Lyons, amid the inſults and mockeries of a crouded amphitheatre, "and ſtill keeping his ſeat; or ſtretched upon a grate of iron over "coals of fire, and breathing out his ſoul among the exquiſite ſuf"ferings of ſuch a tedious execution, rather than renounce his re"ligion, or blaſpheme his Saviour. Such trials ſeem to me above "the ſtrength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reaſon, "faith, conviction, nay and the moſt abſolute certainty of a future "ſtate. Humanity, unaſſiſted in an extraordinary manner, muſt "have ſhaken off the preſent preſſure, and have delivered itſelf out of "ſuch a dreadful diſtreſs by any means that could have been ſug"geſted to it. We can eaſily imagine that many perſons, in ſo good "a cauſe, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the ſtake, "or the block; but to expire leiſurely among the moſt exquiſite tor"tures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental re"ſervation, or an hypocriſy which was not without a poſſibility of "being followed by repentance and forgiveneſs, has ſomething in "it ſo far beyond the force and natural ſtrength of mortals, that "one cannot but think there was ſome miraculous power to ſup"port the ſufferer. 5. We find the church of Smyrna, in that ad"mirable letter which gives an account of the death of Polycarp "their beloved biſhop, mentioning the cruel torments of other "early martyrs for Chriſtianity, are of opinion, that our Saviour "ſtood by them in a viſion, and perſonally converſed with them, "to give them ſtrength and comfort during the bitterneſs of "their long continued agonies: and we have the ſtory of a young "man, who, having ſuffered many tortures, eſcaped with life, and

"told

" told his fellow Chriſtians, of an angel who ſtood by him, and " wiped off the tears and ſweat which ran down his face whilſt he " lay under his ſufferings. We are aſſured at leaſt, that the firſt " martyr for Chriſtianity was encouraged, in his laſt moments, by a " viſion of that divine perſon for whom he ſuffered, and into whoſe " preſence he was then haſtening. 6. Let any man lay his hand " calmly upon his heart, and after reading thoſe terrible conflicts " in which the antient martyrs and confeſſors were engaged, when " they paſſed through ſuch new inventions and varieties of pain as " tired their tormentors; and aſk himſelf, however zealous and ſincere " he is in his religion, whether under ſuch acute and lingering tor- " tures he could ſtill have held faſt his integrity, and have profeſſed " his faith to the laſt, without a ſupernatural aſſiſtance of ſome " kind or other. For my part, when I conſider that it was not an " unaccountable obſtinacy in a ſingle man, or in any particular ſet " of men, in ſome extraordinary juncture; but that there were multi- " tudes of each ſex, of every age, of different countries and con- " ditions, who for near 300 years together made this glorious con- " feſſion of their faith in the midſt of tortures and in the hour of " death: I muſt conclude, that they were either of another make " than men are at preſent, or that they had ſuch miraculous ſup- " ports as were peculiar to thoſe times of Chriſtianity, when with- " out them perhaps the very name of it might have been extin- " guiſhed. 7. It is certain, that the deaths and ſufferings of the " primitive Chriſtians had a great ſhare in the converſion of thoſe " learned Pagans who lived in the ages of perſecution, which, with " ſome intervals and abatements, laſted near 300 years after our " Saviour. Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius and " others, tell us, that this firſt of all alarmed their curioſity, rouſed " their attention, and made them ſeriouſly inquiſitive into the na- " ture of that religion which could endue the mind with ſo much " ſtrength, and evercome the fear of death, nay raiſe an earneſt " deſire of it, though it appeared in all its terrors. This they found " had not been effected by all the doctrines of thoſe philoſophers, " whom they had thoroughly ſtudied, and who had been labouring " at this great point. The ſight of theſe dying and tormented mar- " tyrs, engaged them to ſearch into the hiſtory and doctrines of " him for whom they ſuffered. The more they ſearched, the more " they were convinced, till their conviction grew ſo ſtrong, that " they themſelves embraced the ſame truths, and either actually laid " down their lives, or were always in a readineſs to do it, rather " than depart from them."

10. It is worthy of conſideration likewiſe, that the before-mentioned perſons, of all characters, ages and ſexes, in every country, were induced to renounce their native religions and to embrace the Goſpel, not by the force of arms, the influence of authority, the refinements of policy, or the power of great examples. They were prevailed on to change their faith, merely by the preaching of a few illiterate mechanics and their aſſiſtants, who were wholly

deſtitute of the advantages of birth, education, and fortune, and who by condemning the eſtabliſhed worſhip of all countries were every where looked upon as the moſt flagitious of men. Of ſuch importance in the preſent argument is this circumſtance, that our Lord and his apoſtles have laid a particular ſtreſs upon it. For it is they who direct us to conſider the illiterate character and low ſtation of the firſt preachers of the goſpel, as a proof that in the converſion of the world they acted by the power of truth, and with the aſſiſtance of God, 1 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treaſure in "earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, "and not of us." But the force of this argument will beſt appear, if we conſider the converſion of the world, Firſt ſimply, as implying a change of men's religious opinions: Secondly, as attended with a thorough reformation of their manners: and, thirdly, as expoſing them to unſpeakable ſufferings in their perſons, reputations, and fortunes. The converſion of the world viewed in theſe lights ſhews itſelf an effect infinitely ſuperior to any human labour or perſuaſion whatever, and therefore beyond expreſſion ſuperior to all the powers which a handful of the loweſt of the people from ſo deſpicable a country as Judea can be ſuppoſed to have poſſeſſed.

Firſt, The converſion of the world, conſidered as a change of men's religious principles effected merely by the power of perſuaſion, ſuppoſes that every convert was ſhewed the abſurdity of his former faith, and was brought to ſee that the faith now offered him was both rational and well founded. In order to this, if the perſons who converted the world were not aſſiſted by God, they had the prodigious labour to undergo, 1. Of learning the languages of all the nations, whether barbarous or civilized, to whom they went, before they could ſpeak a word to them, either concerning their ancient belief, or concerning the new faith they were come to offer to them. This itſelf was an obſtacle which muſt have abſolutely marred their deſign; and therefore this ſingle conſideration demonſtrates, that in prevailing with multitudes in all countries to change their religious belief, the apoſtles were inſpired by God with the gift of tongues, as the Chriſtian records affirm.—2. Allowing that, by any means you pleaſe to fancy, theſe men attained the knowledge of all languages in ſuch perfection, that they could ſpeak them fluently; to inſtil knowledge effectually into the minds of the vulgar, was a matter of immenſe labour, requiring particular and frequent applications to every individual. If ſo, how can we ſuppoſe twelve men ſufficient for converting nations? Were they capable of addreſſing all the individuals of thoſe vaſt multitudes, who in the different countries of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, were brought to ſerve the living God by their miniſtry? No: ſuch particular addreſſes were impoſſible; and therefore the converſion of the Gentiles could not be produced by them. An event ſo ſtupendous muſt have been accompliſhed by means more effectual; means capable of ſwaying great numbers at once; namely, undeniable miracles wrought openly in proof of the doctrines which the

apoſtles taught.—3. To inſtruct the multitude is not only a matter of great labour, but of infinite difficulty, eſpecially when their minds are prepoſſeſſed with contrary notions, which they have been taught to conſider as divine. This was the caſe, not only with the Jews, but with all the idolatrous nations to whom the apoſtles offered the doctrines of the goſpel. The religions, in the belief of which the *vulgar* had been educated, were conſidered by them as of divine original. Beſides, theſe religions conſpired with their paſſions, were connected with their intereſts, and in the practice of them the vulgar were confirmed by the countenance, authority, and example of the great men. The religions of the better ſort, properly ſpeaking, were the ſchemes of philoſophy which they adopted. The peculiar tenets of thoſe ſchemes they eſpouſed with the ſame ſtrength of faith wherewith Chriſtians now-adays embrace their ſeveral creeds and confeſſions: and they defended them with the ſame intemperate warmth. To bring the ignorant and the learned off from objects of this ſort, was impoſſible by means merely human. For the ignorant would not attend to diſcourſes, which flatly contradicted their favourite notions, and robbed them of their pleaſures. And as for the philoſophers, they would deteſt a religion which overturned their ſeveral ſyſtems at once, diſcovered their ignorance, mortified their pride, and ruined their credit. Or if the philoſophers were not ſo highly provoked with this religion, they would at leaſt deſpiſe it, and laugh at the perſons who taught it: as we find the Athenians did, Acts xvii. 18. 32. It is therefore certain, that the ſermons of the apoſtles, which made the Heathens renounce their religions, muſt have been accompanied with a divine power, before which all oppoſition vaniſhed. Accordingly one of theſe men tells his converts, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to "the pulling down of ſtrong holds. Caſting down imaginations, "and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of "God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience "of Chriſt."

Secondly, The converſion of the world being attended with a great and wonderful reformation of manners in the Heathens who obeyed the goſpel, is likewiſe a demonſtration that in ſpreading Chriſtianity the apoſtles were expreſsly aſſiſted by God. For however difficult it might be to alter the religious ſentiments of mankind, it was an eaſy matter, in compariſon of the other taſk which the apoſtles undertook and accompliſhed ſo ſucceſsfully. To perſuade the wicked to reform their lives included in it many impoſſibilities under one. The manners of men in thoſe days were beyond meaſure corrupt. The picture, which the apoſtle has drawn of them in the firſt chapter of his epiſtle to the Romans, however ſhocking, is but too juſt. The vices to which they were addicted were the effects of luſts and paſſions rendered unconquerable by long habits of indulgence. In the commiſſion of many acts of wickedneſs, they were authoriſed by the laws and diſcipline of

of their country. Some of the foulest vices were permitted them by the opinion of their philosophers. And in all they were strengthened by the power of example, especially the example of their gods *, by the allurements of pleasure, or by considerations of interest. To persuade great numbers of mankind in these circumstances to forsake their vices, that is, to act contrary to nature, to habit, to example, to interest, and to pleasure, what human eloquence was sufficient? Or if human eloquence was sufficient to persuade them, whence I pray were the converts to derive the power of thoroughly changing, or at least of subduing their passions, and of altering the whole bent and current of their nature? Whence the power of becoming pious, just, charitable, chaste, temperate, meek, humble, heavenly-minded, amid an infinity of powerful temptations, and after having been unjust, uncharitable, intemperate, proud, and worldly-minded, to a great degree? The Pagan converts themselves looked on the sudden and surprising change of manners, wrought on thousands of the most profligate, as something miraculous. Origen in particular compares it to the curing of the lame and the blind, and to the cleansing of lepers. Accordingly, this power in the Christian religion, whereby it produced effects so glorious, recommended it not a little to the virtuous and inquisitive among the Heathens, who examined its evidences. By the consent therefore of all prudent men, it were ridiculous to the last degree, to fancy that the apostles, by means merely human, produced this great change in the manners of such multitudes, formerly enslaved to their lusts, and sold under sin.

Thirdly, That which is most astonishing in this matter, and which most clearly shews the conversion of the world to be the effect, not of any human power or persuasion, far less the effect of the persuasion of an handful of people who were looked upon as the offscourings of the earth, is this; by forsaking their native religions and embracing Christianity, the Heathens not only made shipwreck of all the goods of this life, but exposed their persons to sufferings, to torture, and to death. But of this enough has been said in the foregoing articles. I therefore infer, upon the justest principles, that by such instruments as the Christian apostles, and in such circumstances of persecution as the profession of the gospel brought men into in the early ages, the world could not have been converted, if the facts contained in the gospels were false, and particularly if the apostles and first preachers of Christianity wrought no miracles in confirmation of their reports concerning their master.

11. The argument for the truth of the gospel-history, drawn from the conversion of the world to Christianity, is rendered compleat by this consideration, That our religion has subsisted through the course of seventeen centuries in full vigour, notwithstanding its

* Thus Amphitryon, speaking of Jupiter's intrigue with his wife Alcmena, says, "Pol me haud pœnitet, scilicet boni dividuom mihi dividere cum Jove" Plaut. Amphit. act. v. sc. 1. See B. III. C. 4. sect. 4. N° I. art. 1. also the note p. 247.

enemies have ſtrenuouſly attacked it both with arguments and arms. Its ſtanding the teſt of enquiry, eſpecially in its infancy, is a circumſtance which does great honour to the goſpel. For the ſpace of 300 years when the Chriſtian religion had no protection from the magiſtrate, all men were at liberty, nay were encouraged to argue againſt it with the greateſt boldneſs. In later times, indeed, Infidels are not allowed this liberty in certain countries where Chriſtianity prevails; but in others they may ſpeak their mind freely, and have done it without the leaſt diſadvantage to our cauſe. If the goſpel-hiſtory were a forgery, and the Chriſtian religion a deluſion, how comes it that, in the courſe of ſo many ages of free debate, neither of them has been detected? Other falſe religions have made progreſs in the world, by favour of ignorance, by the force of novelty, by the countenance of civil authority, by the power of the ſword, in ſhort, by any lucky concurrence of circumſtances you pleaſe to name: but they have flouriſhed only for a while. No ſooner have the cauſes ceaſed by which they obtained, than they have vaniſhed. The ravings of enthuſiaſm too have ſuddenly intoxicated multitudes. But by raging and ſpreading, this fire hath always ſpent itſelf. Men have returned to a ſolid way of thinking, without any pains taken to convince them, and but the names of thoſe ſects ſubſiſt at this day. Whereas Chriſtianity has continued for the ſpace of ſeventeen hundred years, in ſpite of all oppoſition. Moreover, being at preſent the prevailing religion in many countries, it is as likely to continue now as ever. Wherefore the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory is firmly ſupported, as by many buttreſſes, ſo by the ſtability and permanency of the Chriſtian religion itſelf; and the rather that the founder of Chriſtianity foretold expreſsly, that his religion and church would continue to the end of time. "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the "gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it." See B. III. C. V. § 2. fine. We therefore his diſciples, who with joy have ſeen in part the wonderful accompliſhment of our maſter's prediction, are willing to riſk the whole cauſe on this ſingle event. And putting it on ſuch a footing, the longer that Chriſtianity continues in the world, though men are the farther removed from the age in which its miracles were wrought, yet the ſtronger does the evidence of its divinity become.

Let us now join together the different particulars comprehended under the converſion of the world.—The Chriſtian religion was introduced every where in oppoſition to the ſword of the magiſtrate, the craft of the prieſts, the pride of the philoſophers, the paſſions and prejudices of the people. What do you think was capable of ſurmounting all theſe difficulties, other than the power of truth and of miracles united?—This religion was not propagated in the dark, nor delivered out by parcels, according to the uſual method in which impoſtures are made to ſucceed; but was fully laid before men all at once, that they might judge of the whole under one view. Therefore mankind were not cheated into the belief of it,

but

but received it upon proper examination and conviction.—The gospel-history was first preached and first believed by multitudes in Judea, where Jesus exercised his ministry, and where every individual had access to know whether the things told of him were real matters of fact. In this country, surely, his history never would have been received, unless it was true, and known to be so by all men.—Moreover, the history of Jesus was preached and believed, in the most noted countries and cities of the world, in the very age wherein he is said to have lived. In that age certainly men, whose faculties were improved by the most perfect state of social life, were good judges of the evidence offered in support of the facts in the gospel-history.—Especially as it is well known, that the age wherein the apostles went about preaching the history of Jesus, was remarkable for those improvements whereby the human faculties are strengthened; remarkable likewise for the communication which subsisted between all countries; so that wise men could not only judge of such extraordinary things as happened, but could impart to one another their sense of those matters. In so enlightened an age, if the things told of the Lord Jesus had been false, they would instantly have been discerned to be so. And the confutation of them would quickly have passed from one country to another, to the utter confusion of the persons who endeavoured to propagate the belief of them.—It is true, the generality of the first converts were men in the middle and lower stations of life. But even these, in an age of such knowledge and intercourse, were sufficiently secured against false pretensions of any kind. Or if you suppose their minds not sufficiently tinctured with knowledge, you should consider that in proportion to their ignorance their attachment to their first religious notions would be strong: and that to bring persons of this character and rank to change their principles, no arguments would be sufficient but evident miracles. Wherefore this class of men being converted in such numbers and so early, is an absolute demonstration that many and great miracles were every where wrought by the first preachers of the gospel.—But there wanted not also among the first converts to Christianity, even in the earliest age, a number of men remarkable for their station, office, genius, education, and fortune, who were well qualified to judge of our religion. The conversion of such persons adds great lustre to the triumphs of the gospel. Its evidences approved themselves, not only to the multitude, but to men of the most refined sense and of the greatest abilities.—However, that which makes the foregoing circumstances of more weighty consideration is, that the profession of Christianity led all without exception to renounce the world, and expose them to the most terrible sufferings; sufferings the bare mention of which is shocking to human nature, and horrible. Who does not see that such numbers of men, of different characters and stations in every country, could not possibly have been persuaded, in these circumstances and at that time, to embrace the Christian religion, unless they had

had the cleareſt evidence given them of the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory? namely the agreeing atteſtations of a ſufficient number of eye-witneſſes, qualified to judge and report the matters which they teſtified, and who at the ſame time verified their atteſtation, by performing in the preſence of the world miracles equal to, if not greater than thoſe they aſcribed to their maſter, particularly by communicating to thoſe who received their teſtimony concerning him the power of working the like miracles.—This concluſion is ſtrengthened by the conſideration of the character of the perſons who perſuaded mankind to change their belief. They were a handful of the meaneſt of the people, from a nation deſpiſed on account of the ill-will which they bare towards the reſt of mankind. Moreover, in all countries where they preached, they were abſolute ſtrangers, of whoſe veracity no one had any knowlege. (See the laſt paragraph of the following ſection). Yet theſe men, in a very ſhort ſpace, prevailed with thouſands every where to change their belief, and to reform their lives, however vicious they had been formerly. Does not every one ſee, that, to make themſelves underſtood in all countries, theſe ſtrangers muſt have been endued by God with the gift of tongues; that, to procure themſelves credit, they muſt have wrought many evident miracles; and that, to make their ſermons have the deſired effect in reforming mankind, they muſt have been accompanied with the power and grace of God?—Laſtly, the Chriſtian religion, thus introduced by the power of God and of truth, hath been ſupported in the world by the ſame powers, through a courſe of many ages, amidſt the ſhocks of arms and a thouſand other accidents ſufficient to have deſtroyed it, if the divine protection had been wanting. Moreover, it will be continued in the world to the end of time, nay and will prevail univerſally in ſpite of all oppoſition, to the utter deſtruction of idol-worſhip and falſe religion of every kind. From all which, the concluſion is manifeſt and certain: that ſuch a great and laſting change in the opinions and practices of ſo many nations, as has been accompliſhed by the preaching of a few of the loweſt of the people from Judea, could never have been effected, eſpecially under perſecution, unleſs the Goſpel which they preached had been verified to the conviction of all by great evident and numerous miracles.

SECT. IV.

Of the arguments, by which our adverſaries endeavour to elude the force of the proof, reſulting from the converſion of the world to Chriſtianity.

1. IT is pretended, that neither the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory in general, nor of the apoſtles miracles in particular, is eſtabliſhed by the converſion of the world to Chriſtianity; becauſe this may have been effected, merely by the reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian doctrines and precepts, approving themſelves ſo fully to the judgement and conſciences of all men, that they could not fail to be received every where.

1. To

1. To this I anſwer, that though the Chriſtian religion be beyond compariſon the beſt ſyſtem of theology and morality that ever was propoſed to the world, it cannot be refuſed that many of its doctrines and precepts are ſuch as to the Heathens would appear mere fooliſhneſs. Of the doctrines the following may be mentioned as examples. The incarnation of the Son of God: his miraculous conception: his being conſtituted judge of the quick and the dead: and his having a right to the ſame honour with the Father: all which the Gentiles would look upon as downright abſurdities, conſidering the meanneſs of his condition, the perſecutions which he underwent, and the ignominy of his death. And that they actually conſidered them as abſurdities, is evident from Celſus's books, the greateſt part of which was taken up in ridiculing the Chriſtians, for pretending that the author of their religion is God, and came down from heaven. Moreover, to the philoſophers nothing could appear more ridiculous than the doctrine of ſalvation through a crucified Saviour, which yet the apoſtles preached with ſuch earneſtneſs and diligence, that it may be ſaid to have been their principal topic every where. Nor muſt the reſurrection of the body be omitted in mentioning the doctrines of Chriſtianity, which to human wiſdom would appear liable to manifold objections.—Even the precepts of the goſpel were not altogether free from exception in the eyes of men devoted to pleaſure, as the Gentiles generally were. In this number we may reckon the precepts concerning ſelf-denial, humility, forgiveneſs of injuries, abſtinence from evil deſires, and the like, ſo often and ſo earneſtly inculcated in the goſpels. Moreover, the many prohibitions of fornication and drunkenneſs, given by the apoſtles in their ſermons and epiſtles, would appear to the Heathens unreaſonable ſeverities; and the rather, that, inſtead of being reckoned vices, both the one and the other was authorized by the laws and cuſtoms of many ſtates, both made part of the worſhip of their gods, and both were patronized by the opinions and practices of the philoſophers *. It is evident, therefore, that the doctrines and precepts juſt now mentioned, inſtead of conciliating fa-

* Thus Porphyry tells of Socrates, Ap. Cyrill. contr. Julian. lib. VI. p. 186. "That "he was moderate in venereal matters, yet without injury to any one. For he either "made uſe of his wife, or of common whores." As to what Lucian ſo often affirms of Socrates in his Dialogues, that he was addicted to the vice common among the Greeks, the love of boys, I cannot tell whether it is to be believed.—What opinion Cicero and the reſt had of fornication, may be learned from the following paſſage of his oration, Pro M. Cœlio, cap. 20. "Si quis eſt qui etiam meretriciis amoribus interdictum putet; "eſt ille quidem valde ſeverus, negare non poſſum: ſed abhorret non modo ab hujus ſeculi "licentia, verum etiam a majorum conſuetudine, atque conceſſis. Quando enim hoc non "factum eſt? Quando reprehenſum? Quando non permiſſum? Quando [illegible] quod fuit, non, "quod licet, non liceret?" On this head let us hear the philoſophers alſo. Epictet. Enchir. c. 47. Περὶ ἀφροδισια, εἰς δυναμιν προγαμε καθαρευειν· παιδοποιεισθω δε, ως νομιμον εστι, μηδε ηδε σε.—Plato, De legib. lib. VI. Παιδι δε εις μεθην, ατε αλλοδι ων ἀφετει, πολλην εν ταις τε τ[illegible] ἐσεσθαι ἐκ, ἐαβαι, ατε ἀπραλες. Ibid. lib. I. Μη θαυμαζε, ω ξενε, νομιζων ετω ἡμιν εἶναι.

Valer. Maxim. lib. II. c. 6. "Siccæ enim ea farum Veneris, in quod ſe matronæ con- "ferebant: atque inde procedentes ad quæſtum dotes, corporis injuria, coemebant; "honeſto nimirum tum inhoneſto vinculo, conjugio junctæ."—Juſtin. lib. XXII. c. 3. "Locrenſes—voverant,—ut de feſto Veneris virgines ſuas proſtituerent."

vour to the Chriſtian religion, muſt, in the beginning at leaſt, have greatly alienated the minds of the Gentiles from it.

2. Let it be granted, for argument's ſake, that every doctrine and precept of the goſpel was ſuch as at firſt ſight would recommend it to mankind; it will not follow that, by the force of this circumſtance alone, Chriſtianity has made its way in the world. To begin with the Jews, they believed the divinity of their religion. They believed this upon the credit of miracles. To bring them off from a religion thus confirmed, to another which abrogated its inſtitutions, and which quite unhinged the conſtitution of their ſtate, would the mere reaſonableneſs of doctrines and precepts alone ſuffice, without any other proof? No. Both religions were on the ſame footing in this reſpect; and therefore the argument could not ſo much as be offered to the Jews. Or though the Chriſtian religion had been greatly ſuperior to the Jewiſh in its doctrines and precepts, it is well known that the ſtubbornneſs of the Jews was not to be bended by ſuch an argument. Nothing but ſigns and wonders would do with them, as one of the apoſtles, who had often preached to them, expreſsly declares, 1 Cor. i. 22. It is plain, therefore, that if our Lord had not proved his miſſion by inconteſtable miracles, and if the apoſtles had not proved the truth of their teſtimony concerning his miracles by working miracles themſelves, and by communicating to their converts the power of miracles, they never would have proſelyted ſo much as one Jew to the Chriſtian religion. —And as for the Gentiles, it is no leſs certain that the reaſonableneſs of the doctrines and precepts of the goſpel, ſuppoſing this to have been ever ſo little ſubject to doubt, would not alone have brought about a general converſion of the Heathens. Some few thinking men among them, who had leiſure to conſider the matter, might perhaps have embraced our faith on account of its excellency. But the bulk of the people, who in all countries and at all times are incapable of abſtract reaſoning, would ſtill have remained attached to their ancient errors. Of this we have an unqueſtionable proof in the labours of the philoſophers, who, if juſt argumentation could have reformed the opinions and practices of mankind, would have been ſufficient inſtructors to the world in ſeveral eſſential points. Nevertheleſs it is certain, that notwithſtanding they poſſeſſed the arts of reaſoning and eloquence in the greateſt perfection, and in their writings propoſed many beautiful notions concerning the Supreme Being, and the worſhip that is due to him; yet none of them ever brought over any one nation or city, far leſs did they bring over many nations, to a compliance with their inſtitutions. Their doctrines and precepts were reliſhed only by a few. The bulk of the people, and even ſome whole ſects, continued in Polytheiſm and idolatry. The worſhip of the Gods conſiſted often of the moſt abominable impurities. Human ſacrifices were not uncommon. Many of the temples were places of avowed proſtitution. (See the note, p. 247). Fornication and drunkenneſs were looked upon as innocent. In ſhort, the laws and diſcipline of all countries were exceedingly

exceedingly corrupt, and the practice of mankind every where ſcandalous beyond belief.—Nor was this the ſtate of barbarous countries only. Even Greece itſelf was in the ſame condition, although the arts and ſciences flouriſhed there, and the minds of men were greatly improved by culture. So much do men's paſſions and prejudices get the better of their reaſon. Having this example before our eyes, to pretend that the excellency of the Chriſtian doctrines and precepts was ſufficient to deſtroy all falſe religions, and to convert the world, without the aid of miracles, is abſurd. In ſhort, he muſt be ignorant of mankind, who can imagine that the mere reaſonableneſs of any religion, or the credible teſtimony of other men concerning the facts on which it is founded, will proſelyte people to the belief thereof; eſpecially if it is diametrically oppoſite to their ſtrongeſt paſſions and prejudices, and altogether inconſiſtent with their intereſts. I muſt therefore repeat it, that the ſpeedy converſion of the world to Chriſtianity, is the ſtrongeſt proof imaginable of the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory; and particularly of the reality of the miracles, therein ſaid to have been performed by Jeſus and his apoſtles, in confirmation of their miſſion from God.

11. Conſtrained by the evidence of the above arguments, ſome of our adverſaries are ſo candid as to acknowledge, that the prevalence of the Chriſtian religion was certainly at the firſt owing to an opinion of miracles performed by its preachers. In the mean time, they pretend, that the general perſuaſion which prevailed concerning the Chriſtian miracles aroſe, not from their reality, but from the paſſion for the marvellous, by which at all times the vulgar every where have been diſtinguiſhed. Men, ſay they, always reject things credible in an ordinary degree: but they readily enough admit things utterly abſurd, the rather upon account of that very circumſtance which ought to deſtroy their authority. For the paſſion for the marvellous excited by miracles ſtrongly inclines them to believe and relate things, from which ſo agreeable an emotion is derived. But to this the anſwer is eaſy: make the pleaſure which men have in hearing and relating marvellous ſtories as great as you pleaſe, ſtill you ought to remember that the belief of the Chriſtian religion, about which the diſpute is, was not a matter of mere ſpeculation. It was followed with the moſt important conſequences. It led men to renounce the religion in which they had been educated. It made them act contrary to their ſtrongeſt prejudices. It deprived them of all the ſatisfactions of life. It expoſed them to the moſt terrible ſufferings. How ridiculous therefore muſt it be for any one to affirm, that in the early ages the miraculous ſtory of an obſcure perſon, the native of a far diſtant country, told by the loweſt claſs of a vagabond nation, was greedily ſwallowed by great numbers of ſenſible people of all ranks in every country, without the leaſt proof, and for no reaſon whatever but the pleaſure which accompanies the belief and relation of marvellous ſtories. As if, for the ſake of that, men would renounce the religion of their forefathers, throw off opinions rivetted in their minds by education, croſs their ſtrongeſt inclinations,

inclinations, ſet themſelves at variance with their own relations, deliberately throw away their poſſeſſions, go calmly to torture, and willingly ſubmit to the moſt painful and ignominious deaths. I appeal to every rational and unprejudiced man, if this be not marvellous indeed? For it ſuppoſes, that, when the goſpel was firſt preached, the eſſential principles of human nature, and the invariable rules of human conduct, were entirely ſuperſeded in all thoſe who anciently gave credit to the goſpel.

If, notwithſtanding all we have ſaid, it is ſtill pretended that the Heathens ſomehow or other may have been converted, without having had proper evidences of the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory laid before them, I would have our adverſaries to conſider the caſe as it actually ſtood. The apoſtles, who preached the Chriſtian religion, were moſt deſpicable in the eyes of all the Gentiles, by reaſon both of their country and their religion; they were ſtrangers of the loweſt claſs of mankind, whoſe honeſty they could have no aſſurance of; their cloaths were often old and ragged, for the great apoſtle of the Gentiles mentions his own nakedneſs among his ſufferings, 1 Cor. iv. 11. They told ſtories of miracles done at a great diſtance, which would appear to every one utterly incredible; and they required the world to yield divine honours to a man, who by their own confeſſion was rejected by their countrymen, and crucified as a deceiver of the people. In ſuch circumſtances, is it to be ſuppoſed that any perſon in his right wits would give them credit upon their own ſimple report; eſpecially as they took no pains to conceal the great and immediate dangers which attended the belief of theſe things. No. Mankind could never have been engaged to give the leaſt heed to their ſtrange ſtory, unleſs they had ſeen them work evident miracles, ſuch as the Chriſtian records aſſure us they did perform. Without this kind of proof, it would have been a greater miracle than any that is aſcribed to the apoſtles, if mankind in every country had given them credit in an affair ſo extraordinary. Here therefore the ſtreſs of the matter is juſtly placed by the friends of Chriſtianity. And it is with the higheſt reaſon they believe the proof of miracles to have been given every where, in ſupport of the goſpel-hiſtory, by the firſt preachers thereof; becauſe without this proof, together with the concurring influence of the grace of God upon the minds of the Gentiles, the latter could never have been prevailed upon in ſuch numbers to embrace the goſpel under perſecution. This all muſt acknowledge without heſitation, who know any thing of the influence which men's luſts, paſſions, prejudices, and intereſts, have over their wills; and how great a ſtrength of conviction is requiſite to overcome the united force of this influence joined in one and the ſame perſon; as was the caſe with all in the firſt ages who embraced the goſpel.

SECT. V.

SECT. V.

V. The truth of the gospel-history proved from the conversion of the learned Jews and Heathens in the early ages.

THE belief of the gospel history, which the men of genius and education both among the Jews and Gentiles were impressed with, who in the first ages embraced Christianity, is an argument for the truth of the gospel history so illustrious, that it well deserves a separate consideration. These men embraced Christianity after having duly examined its evidences. Their character and education qualified them to judge of an affair of this sort. Their conversion was attended with no worldly advantage whatever, but with all manner of disadvantages. It is therefore beyond dispute, that they were fully convinced of the reality of those facts, for the belief of which they made shipwreck of life and its joys. Moreover, their character for wisdom and learning leaves no room to doubt that they examined the proofs of the facts they received with that accuracy which the importance of their consequences demanded, and that they yielded not until constrained by the dint of irresistible evidence.

I. Among the learned Jews converted to Christianity in the first age, "the great company of the priests who became obedient "to the faith," Acts vi. 7. may justly be mentioned. But the instance which merits most attention is the conversion of Saul, afterwards called Paul. This person, in the Christian record, Acts xxvi. is said to have given an account of himself and of his conversion to King Agrippa, and to Queen Berenice, in the hearing of Portius Festus the Roman governor of Judea, of his chief captains, of the principal men of the city of Cæsarea, of the Jews who had come from Jerusalem to accuse him, and of a great concourse of people assembled, as is usual, to witness such transactions. The history of the Acts, which narrates this solemn public transaction, came abroad at the time when, and in the country where, it is said to have happened. We must allow, therefore, that this transaction is no fiction of the historian. Saul actually made the defence which is ascribed to him. And he made it in the presence of Agrippa, Festus, and the rest. This point fixed, we are sure that the account which Saul gave of himself in the hearing of this great assembly is agreeable to truth; because if any particular mentioned by him before persons of the first rank, and others from all parts of Judea, had been false, he might easily have been detected. Besides, his accusers were present, among whom perhaps were some of his former associates, who, being enraged at his apostacy, appeared now as his prosecutors. These, being well acquainted with his history, must have immediately contradicted and confuted him, to the utter ruin of his cause, if he had in the least departed from truth in the account which he gave of himself. To conclude. Saul on this occasion openly affirmed, that his character and conduct from

from his youth up were known to moſt of the principal people in Jeruſalem, who could atteſt the truth of what he ſaid, more eſpecially concerning his perſecuting the diſciples of Jeſus, a particular relation of which he now gave in the hearing of the whole aſſembly. Acts xxvi. 4. "My manner of life from my youth, which was at "the firſt among mine own nation at Jeruſalem, know all the "Jews. 5. Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would "teſtify) that after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, I lived "a Phariſee . . . . 9. I verily thought with myſelf, that I ought "to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. "10. Which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem: and many of the "ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having received authority from "the chief prieſts; and when they were put to death, I gave my "voice againſt them. 11. And I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled them to blaſpheme; and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted them even unto ſtrange "cities." See likewiſe chap. xxii. 5. where on the ſtairs of the caſtle Antonia, in the hearing of the multitude, he openly appealed, for the truth of his having perſecuted the Chriſtians, to the high prieſt and all the eſtate of the elders from whom he received his commiſſion.—It is certain, therefore, that in his younger years Saul was a violent perſecutor of the Chriſtians; that he puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue; and that his zeal carried him ſo far as to make him perſecute them even in ſtrange cities. And as it is certain that Saul in his younger years was a furious perſecutor of the Chriſtians, it is equally certain that afterwards he became a zealous preacher of the faith which he once deſtroyed. It was for the preaching of this faith that he was now in chains, had ſuffered a long impriſonment, and was to be judged by Cæſar at Rome. An alteration of conduct ſo extraordinary, in a perſon of Saul's ſenſe and learning, can be accounted for only by one of three ſuppoſitions. Either, firſt, He was hurried into it by ſome unaccountable enthuſiaſm wherewithal he was ſeized. Or, 2, Knowing the whole to be a fraud, he became a preacher of Chriſtianity for the ſake of ſome advantage which he propoſed to himſelf from that way; ſo that his converſion was a downright cheat. Or, 3, We muſt receive the account which he himſelf gave of his apoſtleſhip. His enmity againſt Chriſtianity and its diſciples was diſarmed by Jeſus appearing to him from heaven, and giving him a commiſſion to preach the goſpel. Now of theſe ſuppoſitions in their order. And,

1. We are ſure that Saul's converſion was not the effect of enthuſiaſm. For, firſt of all, the pretended viſions, revelations, and divine communications wherein enthuſiaſts deal, are all known to be the effects of their own imagination heated with intenſe meditation on ſubjects which they have perſuaded themſelves into the belief of, without any reaſon at all. Now ſo far was this from being the caſe with Saul, in what happened to him on the road to Damaſcus, that, inſtead of having perſuaded himſelf into the belief

of the reſurrection of Jeſus, and heating his imagination with intenſe meditation thereon, he looked upon it as a downright cheat; he took Jeſus himſelf for a deceiver, he hated the Chriſtians as deluded enthuſiaſts, or as bold impoſtors, and therefore he perſecuted them to the death. To ſuppoſe that one in this temper was converted to Chriſtianity by the power of enthuſiaſm, which produced in his diſtempered brain a viſion of one whoſe reſurrection he denied, is to contradict the whole current of human experience.—In the ſecond place, it ought to be remembered, that Saul was not the only perſon who ſaw this viſion. There were others in the company equally enemies to the Chriſtian cauſe with himſelf, and who therefore were in no diſpoſition to form any viſionary ſcene in favour thereof, who nevertheleſs "beheld a great light "ſhining around them, above the brightneſs of the ſun at noon "day," Acts ix. 3. and who were ſo aſtoniſhed with the viſion, that they ſtood ſpeechleſs, hearing a voice, though not the words ſpoken, Acts xxii. 9. If this viſion proceeded entirely from Saul's enthuſiaſm, how came the imaginations of the whole company to be ſeized with preciſely the ſame phrenſy? or how came they to be ſeized with it at the ſame inſtant? That there was not the leaſt difference, either in the matter or the time of their phrenſy, is truly wonderful.—In the third place, if we believe that the appearing of Jeſus to Saul on the road to Damaſcus was the pure effect of his own enthuſiaſm, we muſt affirm that the commiſſion which he received from Chriſt at that time, with all its conſequences, was in like manner the effect of enthuſiaſm; particularly, that the miracles by which he converted the Gentiles exiſted no where but in his own imagination; that all the converts every where, who believed in Jeſus becauſe they thought they ſaw his apoſtle work miracles, were enthuſiaſts; that the power of working miracles and ſpeaking with tongues, which the converted Gentiles received from this apoſtle, were mere fallacies; that the ſick themſelves whom they healed by virtue of this power, the lame whoſe members they reſtored, and the perſons out of whom they caſt devils, were deluded into the belief of cures, while no cure was wrought. Alſo we muſt affirm, that the doctrine and precepts which he taught were the pure effects of his own enthuſiaſm, notwithſtanding they were diametrically oppoſite to all his former principles and practices as a proud ſelf-righteous Phariſee. In ſhort, if we fancy Saul was an enthuſiaſt in his converſion, we muſt believe that every thing he wrote, ſaid, or did as an apoſtle of Jeſus, was the effect of diſtraction; that all who gave the leaſt heed to him were infected with the like madneſs; and that whole nations to whom he preached, and who believed that he wrought miracles, were under the power of the groſſeſt deluſion; ſuppoſitions ſufficiently extravagant to demonſtrate their own abſurdity.—Laſtly, I might here ſhew that all the arguments, by which the other apoſtles are cleared from the charge of enthuſiaſm, conſpire with double force to prove that Saul was no enthuſiaſt. But I ſhall only obſerve

ſerve in general, that if, in the opinion of Lord Shafteſbury and the Deiſts, Socrates ſtands vindicated from the charge of enthuſiaſm by "his penetration, his wonderful good ſenſe and extent of judgement, the command he had of his thoughts and ſentiments, the "ſubſtantial truths, the noble inſtructions he propoſed to mankind, his addreſs and inſinuation, his conſtant chearfulneſs of "mind, the univerſal rectitude of his manners;" Saul is much more effectually cleared from the ſame charge by theſe qualities. For the Chriſtian apoſtle far excelled the philoſophical patriarch in them all; as every judicious perſon muſt acknowledge, who compares the writings and conduct of Saul with the laboured accounts given of Socrates by his diſciples, who have ſtudied to enrich their maſter, by adding to his doctrines and diſcoveries whatever the fund of their own imagination and eloquence was capable of ſupplying.

2. You muſt acknowledge that Saul's converſion was not a matter of impoſture, if you conſider that in taking up the office of an apoſtle no advantage was to be reaped by him, unleſs you reckon as gain that certain loſs of all worldly goods, and thoſe heavy perſecutions to which the apoſtles, as the ringleaders of the ſect of the Nazarenes, were eſpecially expoſed Beſides, in Saul's caſe the evils attending the change of his ſentiments and conduct were particularly bitter. For he could not but foreſee, that by his former aſſociates he would be deteſted as an apoſtate; and that their rage would prompt them by all means to compaſs the diſcovery and puniſhment of his impoſture. Nor is this all: there are particular circumſtances attending Saul's converſion, which clearly prove his integrity, and which for that reaſon muſt not be overlooked. Such as,—Firſt, if he had acted the impoſtor when he took the reſolution of becoming a Chriſtian preacher, he would have conferred with the chiefs in the confederacy before he publicly aſſumed that character, in order to learn from them the things he was to preach, leſt his ſtory and theirs had been inconſiſtent. Or, if he ſaw it neceſſary to aſſume the character of an apoſtle before he converſed with the others, common prudence would have directed him to feign his converſion as happening in Jeruſalem, that he might have the authors of the fraud at hand to confer with privately. Or, if he was ſo fooliſh as to be converted in a diſtant country, and immediately to publiſh the ſtory of his converſion, neceſſity muſt have obliged him to go forthwith to Jeruſalem, where alone he could learn the ſecrets of the impoſture he was preparing himſelf to propagate. Yet none of all theſe courſes did this man take. For, notwithſtanding his knowledge of Chriſtianity could be no other than ſuperficial, his converſion, according to his own account of it, happened near to Damaſcus, at the diſtance of many miles from Jeruſalem, and where all the Chriſtians, knowing the errand on which he was come, ſhunned him with the utmoſt care. Moreover, after his converſion he conferred neither with one nor other, as he himſelf tells the Galatians, chap. i. 16. "Immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood: "17. Neither went I up to Jeruſalem, to them that were apoſtles

" before me; but I went unto Arabia, and returned again to Da-
" maſcus." At his return to Damaſcus, he immediately commenced apoſtle, fully inſtructed in the whole Chriſtian ſcheme. For Acts ix. 20. " Straightway he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogue,
" that he is the Son of God;" to the aſtoniſhment of all who heard him, but eſpecially of thoſe who knew on what errand he had come to Damaſcus. 22. " But Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength,
" and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus, proving
" that this is the very Chriſt." And the zeal wherewith he acted in his new character ſo enraged the Jews, that they would have killed him, if he had not eſcaped out of the city. The fact is, Saul did not go to Jeruſalem till three years after his converſion, Gal. i. 18. And even then he abode only fifteen days, and converſed with none of the apoſtles, ſave Peter and James. At this viſit he received no addition to his knowledge in the Chriſtian ſcheme from the two apoſtles, notwithſtanding they were pillars. He had farther inſight into the deſign of the goſpel than they. His commiſſion taught him that repentance and remiſſion of ſins were to be preached to the Gentiles. He entertained the deſign of doing it himſelf, but ſpake nothing of his deſign to the two apoſtles, perceiving that they had no idea of the reception of the Gentiles into the church. He went away, therefore, and ſpent fourteen years in diſtant countries, converting great multitudes. Then he returned to Jeruſalem, and communicated to the apoſtles privately the goſpel which he preached; and, in the conference which enſued on this ſubject, he found that even thoſe who ſeemed chiefs added nothing to his knowledge, Gal. ii. 6. All thoſe things plainly ſhew, that in the matter of his converſion Saul did not act the cheat. He received inſtruction from no man; yet his goſpel was the ſame with that taught by all the apoſtles, except in the one article relating to the Gentiles, which the reſt acceded to afterwards. Such a perfect agreement could not have happened, unleſs Saul had derived his knowledge of Chriſtianity from revelation.—Secondly, If Saul's converſion had been the effect of impoſture, the manner in which he has told it expoſed him to an eaſy confutation. He was on the road to Damaſcus, accompanied by perſons who had the ſame intention with himſelf of perſecuting the Chriſtians, and who perhaps were appointed his aſſiſtants in the commiſſion which he had received from the chief prieſts. As he and they drew near to Damaſcus, Jeſus appeared to him from heaven, and appointed him one of his apoſtles, Acts xxvi. 12. " Whereupon as I went to Damaſcus, with authority and com-
" miſſion from the chief prieſts; 13. At mid-day, O king, I ſaw
" in the way a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun,
" ſhining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.
" 14. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice
" ſpeaking unto me, and ſaying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul,
" why perſecuteſt thou me? It is hard for thee to kick againſt the
" pricks. 15. And I ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid, I
" am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt. 16. But riſe, and ſtand upon
" thy

" thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make " thee a miniſter and a witneſs both of theſe things which thou haſt " ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee; " 17. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto " whom now I ſend thee." His companions, he tells us, ſaw the light, and heard the voice which ſpake to him. But they ſaw no man, Acts ix. 7. probably becauſe they immediately fell with their faces to the ground Moreover, by this light Saul was ſtruck blind, and his companions led him by the hand into Damaſcus. All this happened but ſeventeen years before he made his defence at Cæſarea. His companions, therefore, very probably were alive; as were the chief prieſts likewiſe, from whom he ſaid he had received the commiſſion. If the matter was a forgery, how could it, in the circumſtances mentioned, eſcape being detected? Eſpecially as he was now on a trial for his life, the ground of which was his attachment to Chriſtianity. Thus, according to the account which Saul himſelf gave of his converſion, it comprehended facts and circumſtances incompatible with impoſture. Therefore it is unreaſonable to entertain any ſuſpicion, that in this matter he acted the deceiver.

3. Saul being neither an enthuſiaſt nor an impoſtor, it follows that his converſion was produced by the miraculous appearing of Jeſus to him, not far from Damaſcus, as he himſelf affirmed. For if you think any other cauſe ſufficient to produce this effect, ſuch as the conſideration of the miracles of Jeſus, and the application which the apoſtles made of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament to him, you ought to conſider what Saul's general character was, together with the particular temper of mind he was in at the time of his converſion. " After the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of their religion he lived " a Phariſee." By education therefore he was zealous of the law. Moreover, being of a warm temper, his zeal was not confined within ordinary bounds. Becauſe the Chriſtians were ſuppoſed to make void the inſtitutions of Moſes, he ſhewed his zeal by perſecuting them to death. How came this fury of paſſion to be overcome, and to be turned into burning zeal for the cauſe againſt which it had exerted itſelf ſo keenly? How came it to be thus changed in an inſtant? But eſpecially, how came it to be changed at the time it was in its greateſt heighth; having puſhed Saul to undertake ſo long a journey as from Jeruſalem to Damaſcus, that he might puniſh the Chriſtians? This ſtrange and ſudden alteration of paſſions, principles, and conduct, could not be produced by the influence of the miracles of Jeſus and his apoſtles; nor by any effect which the conſideration of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament can be ſuppoſed to have had upon him. With theſe Saul was acquainted from the beginning. If they had been to operate his converſion, it muſt have happened long before this. His paſſions and prejudices were ſuch, that he was not capable of weighing impartially the miracles and prophecies by which our Lord's pretenſions were ſupported, nor even of attending to them. Neither was he reconciled to the Chriſtians and their cauſe, by any admiration which he entertained

of

of the holineſs and innocence of their lives. His zeal for the Jewiſh religion made him regard the Chriſtians, who taught "that Jeſus "of Nazareth would deſtroy the temple, and change the cuſtoms "which Moſes delivered" (Acts vi. 14.), as blaſphemers againſt the temple and the law, and filled him with enmity towards them.

4. It is therefore a matter ſubject to no doubt, that Saul the perſecutor of the Chriſtians was converted by the appearing of Jeſus to him as he went to Damaſcus. I proceed now to obſerve, that his being converted in this manner is a ſtrong confirmation of the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory. Saul was educated in Jeruſalem, under the moſt noted maſters. While Jeſus exerciſed his miniſtry, he attended the ſchool of Gamaliel. Chriſt's miracles and pretenſions making a great noiſe, Saul, though young, had zeal ſufficient to make him range himſelf on the ſide of the chief prieſts and doctors, who apprehended Jeſus and put him to death. Withal, no ſooner was it preached that Jeſus of Nazareth was riſen from the dead, than Saul's zeal prompted him to become one of the moſt violent perſecutors of the witneſſes of his reſurrection. To overthrow the pretenſions of theſe men, the moſt direct and obvious method was to detect the falſehood of the reports, which they publiſhed concerning the miracles and other tranſactions of their maſter's life, but eſpecially concerning his reſurrection from the dead. The propriety and efficacy of this method of confutation, a perſon of Saul's good ſenſe muſt have clearly ſeen. Wherefore, if the matters which the Apoſtles told concerning their maſter were not ſo univerſally known as to render all inquiry into them needleſs, we may be ſure the firſt thing this champion for Judaiſm did, was to ſearch with the greateſt diligence and care into the truth of them. For an inquiry of this ſort, Saul was qualified beyond many. His profeſſion was that of literature. He ſtudied under the moſt renowned maſters. He profited above his equals. He was therefore not only a man of learning, but of genius. His zeal in behalf of the law was uncommon. His induſtry was equal to his zeal. The journey which he took to Damaſcus, to perſecute the Chriſtians, ſhews what pains he took in this affaire. He lived in the country where Jeſus exerciſed his miniſtry. His principal reſidence was in Jeruſalem, the center of intelligence for Judea. Moreover, the ſermons and miracles of Jeſus, which he ſet himſelf to examine, were the tranſactions of his own time. Theſe things conſidered, it can neither be doubted that Saul inquired into the truth of the reports which paſſed concerning the Lord Jeſus, nor that he was well qualified for a buſineſs of this nature. What the iſſue of the pains which he took was, his converſion demonſtrates; for if the hiſtory of Jeſus, as the ſame was publickly preached by the Apoſtles, had been condemned by the general ſenſe of the Jewiſh nation at that time; or if, upon the inquiry which Saul and others of his party made into the particular miracles of Jeſus, theſe were found to be falſe in fact, it is as certain as any mathematical demonſtration, that no appearance or viſion from heaven could prove them to be true, or make any ſenſible perſon who knew their falſhood al-

ter his conduct either with relation to the facts themſelves, or to the people who reported them. In a caſe of this nature, no man of common underſtanding would change his conduct, till he changed his opinion; that is, till he believed thoſe things to be true, which by the cleareſt evidence of reaſon and experience he knew to be falſe. But, I pray, what viſion was able to produce a belief of this ſort, in one not abſolutely mad? It is therefore certain, that unleſs Saul had previouſly been convinced of the truth of the things told concerning Jeſus, the viſion on the road to Damaſcus inſtead of making him commence believer and preacher, would not have had ſo much influence with him as to make him lay aſide, even for a moment, his deſign of perſecuting the Chriſtians. From theſe things, the concluſion is both obvious and certain: namely, that Saul's converſion neceſſarily preſuppoſes his knowlege and conviction of the particulars reported by the Apoſtles concerning their maſter. The truth is, his age and his abode in Jeruſalem gave him opportunity to know the whole matter. He may have heard Jeſus preach in Jeruſalem and its neighbourhood, during the feſtivals. He may have been one of thoſe who went to ſee Lazarus after his reſurrection. He may even have accompanied the Scribes and Phariſees, who often went from Jeruſalem to Galilee, to watch Jeſus. For his exceeding zeal would naturally lead him to mix in affairs of this ſort. Or, though he was neither preſent at any of our Lord's miracles, nor converſed with the ſubjects of them, it was not poſſible for him to ſhut his ears againſt the univerſal reports and affirmations of all mankind, who, whether they belived in Jeſus of Nazarus or no, were conſtrained to agree in this, that he did many great and evident miracles. Accordingly Paul, in the defence which he made for himſelf before king Agrippa and all the Jews at Cæſarea, having mentioned Chriſt's reſurrection, affirms that it was a matter which nobody pretended to doubt of, and appeals to the king himſelf, as knowing the truth of it, Acts xxvi. 26. "For the king knoweth of theſe things, before whom "I ſpeak freely: for I am perſuaded that none of theſe things are hidden "from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." However, though Saul before his converſion was fully convinced of the truth of Chriſt's miracles, he eluded the force of them, as the other learned Jews of his party did, by aſcribing them to Beelzebub. None of Chriſt's enemies denied his miracles, neither did they perſecute his Diſciples for believing and preaching them. The ſingle point upon which they founded their perſecution of the Apoſtles of Jeſus, was their preaching publicly that Jeſus of Nazareth, whom the rulers had crucified, was riſen from the dead, and from his reſurrection inferring that he was the Son of God. Now theſe facts were demonſtrated to Saul by Chriſt's perſonal appearance to him. And indeed they were the only points that could be proved to him by ſuch a miracle. If Saul never ſaw Jeſus before, his zeal certainly would lead him to be preſent at his trial and puniſhment. He may therefore have been ſo well acquainted with his form and voice, as to know him when he named himſelf. For that he ſaw Jeſus diſtinctly is certain from his own teſtimony,

and

and from the effect which the ſight had upon him. It ſtruck him blind; a misfortune which his companions eſcaped, becauſe though they ſaw the light which ſurrounded Jeſus and heard his voice, they did not continue looking till they ſaw his perſon. Nay, though Saul had not been ſo well acquainted with Jeſus as to know his voice and form, he could be in no doubt of the truth of his appearing, after the miraculous recovery that was granted him from his blindneſs, and after he experienced that along with the commiſſion to preach to the Gentiles, his mind was filled all at once with the knowlege of the Goſpel ſcheme, that the power of miracles was beſtowed upon him, and that the gift of tongues was infuſed into him. Accordingly, being fully convinced, he went forth ſtraightway, and boldly preached the facts, of which he had ſuch certain aſſurance; namely, that Jeſus was riſen from the dead, and that by his reſurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Acts ix. 20, 22.

Thus Saul's converſion remains an illuſtrious confirmation of the truth of all the facts in the Goſpel-hiſtory. Becauſe if any of the things told concerning the Lord Jeſus had been falſe, in the circumſtances wherein Saul was placed, with the abilities which he poſſeſſed, and by favour of the opportunities for diſcovery which he enjoyed, he muſt have come to the certain knowlege that they were ſo. And having arrived at this concluſion, no miraculous appearance whatever could have had any influence to prove them true, or to make him believe them. In one word, Saul's converſion by the appearing of Jeſus to him preſuppoſes his knowledge and conviction of the truth of our Lord's hiſtory. But if Saul while he was an enemy of Chriſt, and a perſecutor of his Diſciples, acknowleged the truth of his miracles, we may reſt aſſured that they were real matters of fact. Becauſe nothing but their evident reality could have forced the belief of ſo violent an enemy.——I ſhall finiſh my reflections on this ſubject with obſerving, that the argument for the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, drawn from Saul's converſion, is equally concluſive on the ſuppoſition that he was converted by an enthuſiaſtic dream or viſion. Becauſe ſuch a viſion could have had no influence to make him change his conduct, except he previouſly knew and acknowleged the truth of the things which concerned Jeſus. In ſhort, the converſion of this Apoſtle, viewed in any light you pleaſe, is a ſhining monument of the truth of the Goſpel hiſtory.

II. Among thoſe learned Gentiles whoſe converſion from Heatheniſm adds luſtre to the evidences of the Goſpel-hiſtory, the following reſpectable names are deſervedly mentioned. Quadratus, Ariſtides, Juſtin Martyr, Tatian, Irenæus, Athenagoras, all Grecian philoſophers of note, who, after their converſion, wrote in defence of Chriſtianity, and ſuffered for their belief of it. Now common ſenſe dictates, that perſons of their learning and prudence would not along with their religion have renounced all the views of ambition by which they were animated, and have ſubjected them-

ſelves to ſufferings innumerable, unleſs they had believed the Goſpel-hiſtory, whereon the new religion embraced by them was founded. But the Goſpel-hiſtory men of this character would not have believed, unleſs they had had ſufficient means of examining the truth thereof, and unleſs upon examination they had found the evidence accompanying it undoubted.

With reſpect to the means which the learned Heathens enjoyed of examining the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, they muſt be acknowleged more than ſufficient. Beſides the twelve Apoſtles, there were many eye-witneſſes of our Lord's miracles and reſurrection, who made it the only buſineſs of their life to go up and down the world preaching his hiſtory. Thoſe witneſſes were ſo numerous, and uſed ſuch diligence in ſpreading the Goſpel, that the learned Gentiles in all countries had opportunity to hear, converſe with, and examine them. The effect which their preaching had in turning the multitude from the eſtabliſhed worſhip, could not fail to excite the curioſity of the better ſort. Men of taſte would give them a patient hearing, on account of their numbers. The perfect and conſtant agreement obſervable in the reports of theſe witneſſes, however numerous they were, or at whatever diſtance of time or place they told their ſtory, rendered the things which they told highly probable. But the circumſtance which above all others procured them credit was, that in every country they openly performed many and great miracles, to the conviction of all beholders. Nay, they communicated to the Gentiles, who believed, the power of working miracles, and of ſpeaking with tongues. Proofs of this kind, every capable judge muſt be ſenſible, were ſufficient foundations for the moſt ſcrupulous to build their faith upon. And proofs of this kind every where abounded. For who could doubt that Jeſus of Nazareth healed the ſick and raiſed the dead, when they ſaw ſo many of his Diſciples do the very ſame things? Or rather, who could doubt of the truth of the miracles, whether of the Maſter or of the Diſciples, when they themſelves received from theſe men the power of miracles? Wherefore, the learned Heathens, who were contemporary with the Apoſtles, had each in his own country the fulleſt and cleareſt evidence laid before him of the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, and believed it upon the ſureſt foundation.——In the age likewiſe which followed that of the Apoſtles, the learned Heathens had ſufficient means of informing themſelves of the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory. For, in all places, thoſe who believed the reports of the eye-witneſſes were formed into churches, over which the moſt knowing, pious, and prudent were appointed to preſide as biſhops, whoſe office it was faithfully to teach, both in public and private, the things which they had heard from the mouth of the Apoſtles concerning the Lord. Theſe reports were confirmed by the other members of the church, who had alſo heared the Apoſtles preach, and ſeen them work miracles. And to their teſtimony, the biſhops and firſt Diſciples procured ready faith from all, by exerciſing before all the gifts of the ſpirit which they had received from the Apoſtles. They wrought miracles and

and ſpake with tongues, and by ſo doing put it beyond even the poſſibility of doubt, that the Apoſtles and other eye-witneſſes of Chriſt's miniſtry performed miracles in confirmation of their reports concerning his life, death, and reſurrection.——Farther, the ſucceſſors of the apoſtolical converts in the third generation related the miracles which they ſaw theſe converts perform. And, though they wrought no miracles themſelves in ſupport of their teſtimony, they rendered it indubitable by laying down their life in the cauſe. The biſhops of many churches in this manner ſealed the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory with their blood. For in all the perſecutions they generally were the firſt who fell. They were not, however, the only witneſſes, who thus atteſted the miracles of the Apoſtles and their immediate Diſciples. Thouſands, and ten thouſands of the people, who had beheld theſe miracles, ſuffered death rather than renounce their belief of Chriſtianity, and by ſo doing ſhewed in the moſt convincing manner the truth of the Apoſtles miracles, and of the miracles of their immediate Diſciples, whereby they had been converted. In this age likewiſe, the learned Heathens might ſee and converſe with ſome, upon whom our Lord himſelf had performed miracles of healing. For that ſome ſuch ſurvived the Apoſtles, and were ſeen by perſons who lived in the ſecond century, we learn from Quadratus in the only paſſage of his apology now remaining, and which the reader will find in the note below *.——"The perſons in the fourth "ſucceſſion, who were preſent at the execution of the witneſſes laſt "mentioned," had in their ſufferings the fulleſt evidence which human teſtimony could afford, for believing the truth of the miracles of the Apoſtles and their Diſciples. Accordingly, in their turn, they demonſtrated how fully they believed theſe things by ſuffering any torments, however ſevere, rather than renounce the belief of them. By their ſufferings, therefore, they in like manner confirmed their

* The paſſage, in the Apology of Quadratus mentioned above, is preſerved by Euſebius in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, lib. IV. C 3. who has quoted it in the following manner: "Moreover, the ſame Quadratus ſhews his own antiquity by what he ſays in the following paſſage: "Our Saviour's works were of a laſting nature, for they were true: ſuch as perſons healed "of diſeaſes, perſons raiſed from the dead. Theſe perſons were ſeen, not only when they "were healed and raiſed, but long afterwards; and that not only during the time our Saviour "was on earth, but for a conſiderable time after his departure; ſo that ſome of them reached to "our days. Such a perſon then was he." See alſo Lib. III. C. 39 where Euſebius ſpeaks of Quadratus as contemporary with the daughters of Philip the Evangeliſt, and as an immediate ſucceſſor of the Apoſtles.

The above Apology, Euſebius ſays, was preſented to the emperor Adrian. Adrian began his reign A. D. 117. In that year Quadratus would be no more than 57 years old, if he was born A. D. 60. Jairus' daughter was raiſed when ſhe was about 12 years of age. Of the ſame age we may ſuppoſe the widow of Nain's ſon to have been, when he obtained the like favour. For though in our tranſlation he is called a dead man, the expreſſion in the original is, τὸ τεθνηκὸς, one dead. Beſides, the circumſtances mentioned in the hiſtory of this miracle, ſhew that he was a boy, or at moſt a youth. Jairus' daughter then, and the widow of Nain's ſon, A. D. 60, when Quadratus was born, were only 38 years old. Wherefore Quadratus, and all of the ſame age with him, may have converſed with and taken particular notice of theſe perſons, on account of their having been raiſed by Jeſus from the dead. For when Quadratus and his contemporaries were 20 years old, Jairus' daughter and the widow of Nain's ſon were no more than 58. Quadratus and his contemporaries may even have ſeen and converſed with Lazarus, if at his reſurrection Lazarus was no older than Jeſus himſelf. For on that ſuppoſition when Quadratus was 20, Lazarus, if he was then alive, would be no more than 80.

ſucceſſors in the faith of Chriſt. Thus the memory of the great articles of the evangelical hiſtory was handed down from age to age, ſurrounded with the brighteſt luſtre of evidence. Becauſe vaſt numbers of ſenſible and virtuous men could not be ſuppoſed ſo entirely void of the fear of God and of all concern for their own ſalvation, as with their dying breath to maintain a parcel of forgeries, whether of their own invention or of the invention of their predeceſſors; or though they had actually engaged in a fraud of this nature, without regarding the conſequences; could any reaſonable perſon fancy their own fortitude was ſufficient to carry them through ſuch fiery trials, in ſupport of downright falſehoods? No. Suppoſitions of this kind plainly exceed all the capacities of mortality: and therefore they are to be treated as mere chimeras.——The truth is, it muſt be acknowleged, that the learned Heathens, in the firſt ages, had every where opportunity of examining the proofs of the Goſpel-hiſtory; that they did examine them with care; that upon examination they found this hiſtory attended with irreſiſtable evidence; and that they embraced it with the firmeſt perſuaſion. For they quitted their native religion, they bade adieu to the purſuit of ambition, they ſtripped themſelves of all the advantages of the preſent time, they ſubjected themſelves to the heavieſt ſufferings, and moſt of them ended their lives in torment. Wherefore though theſe men lived at a great diſtance from Judea, the ſcene of our Lord's miniſtry, the teſtimony which they have borne to the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory by their converſion ought to have great weight with us, eſpecially as their integrity in this teſtimony is beyond exception.

To the above indeed it is objected, that, from the converſion of the learned Heathens, no argument can be drawn in behalf of the Goſpel-hiſtory, becauſe in their writings we meet with ſuch ridiculous notions; ſuch childiſh reaſonings, and ſuch credulity, as beſpeak them to have been men of ſhallow capacities, whoſe judgement in a matter ſo important as the evidences of the Goſpel-hiſtory is by no means to be relied on. But,

1. With reſpect to the abſurd opinions for which ſome of the Fathers are deſpiſed, it ought to be conſidered that theſe were the relics of their Heatheniſh prejudices, which even with the aſſiſtance of Goſpel light they were not able wholly to ſhake off. Nor will this ſeem ſtrange to thoſe who conſider how deeply the notions we receive from education, remain imprinted in our minds through the whole of life.—The wiſeſt of the Heathens, not excepting the philoſophers themſelves, believed that the Gods had intercourſe with women. Hence ſprang the race of the heroes. If any doubt concerning the prevalence of this fancy is entertained, Pauſanias and Plutarch philoſophers of great reputation, may be cited reaſoning gravely on the ſubject. Even Celſus and Porphyry, after they had read the Goſpels, did not relinquiſh this notion. But the moſt ſtriking proof of the prevalency of this opinion, we have in the ſtory told by Joſephus, Ant. xviii 4. of Mundus and Paulina. This Roman lady, it ſeems, was greatly devoted to the worſhip of Iſis,

Isis. At the intreaty of Mundus, who was desperately in love with her, and whose solicitations she had rejected with the utmost detestation, the priests of Isis persuaded her that the God Anubis entertained a passion for her. Elated with so great an honour, Paulina, with her husband's consent, spent a night in the temple, and had Mundus introduced to her under the notion of the God. Mundus himself revealed the secret, which occasioned the punishment of the priests, and the demolition of the temple. Considering therefore how general this notion was, concerning the intercourse of the Gods with women, is it any wonder to hear Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and others, who, by their conversion, were not entirely divested of their Heathenish prejudices, uttering very strange sentiments concerning the love which demons (so they termed all the Heathen Gods) bare to women? especially when it is remembered, that in this fancy they may have been confirmed by misunderstanding the passage of Genesis, which speaks of the sons of God marrying the daughters of men.

2. With regard to the childish reasonings found in the writings of the Fathers, it is more than probable they were led into them by that branch of their education called rhetoric. This art taught people to declaim upon all subjects, and to reason plausibly on both sides of any question. Hence, in these declamations, the great matter was to argue, not only from solid topics, but to advance every thing which in such a case could be made to have the shew of probability. This kind of discourses therefore admitted of figurative senses, forced allusions, and allegorical interpretations. The latter especially were greatly in vogue, taking their rise from the gross absurdities of the commonly received theology. For the philosophers, especially after the introduction of Christianity, being ashamed of such things, explained them allegorically, and drew from them the mysteries both of natural philosophy and morality. Hence the humour of allegorizing, which made so great a figure in the Pagan theology, passed into all other subjects, and allegorical senses ingeniously elicited were esteemed weighty arguments. Wherefore when we find Justin, from the four pillars of a house, the four quarters of the world, and the cherubim, proving that there ought to be four Gospels; or when we find him, with great affectation, declaiming upon the cross of Christ, and making it by strained comparisons to be represented by every thing almost in nature, we ought not to attribute these things to any weakness of judgement in the man, but should look upon them merely as the effect of his education, and as a compliance with the prevailing mode of the times; there being in reasoning a fashion, as in every thing else.

3. As for the credulity of the Fathers, we ought to remember that these men having embraced Christianity at the expence of every thing dear in life, it was no wonder they were vehemently enamoured of it. Moreover, knowing it to be the will of God, that it should be established in the world, they were animated with the most fervent zeal for its support and propagation. In such circumstances,

cumſtances, it was natural for them eagerly to embrace every opportunity of promoting its intereſts, and every argument which had the leaſt tendency, whether real or apparent, to ſupport it. For their zeal, however commendable in itſelf, made them raſh and impatient of enquiry. Hence, without much examination, they took up with all the arguments and facts which ſeemed to favour Chriſtianity, though in reality many of them tended to impair the reputation of the Goſpel. For example; the arguments which Juſtin drew from the pretended ſtatue of Simon Magus, the forged Sibylline oracles, the miraculous compoſition of the Septuagint verſion of the Hebrew Scriptures, and ſuch like matters, are altogether ridiculous, and, inſtead of doing ſervice to the Chriſtian cauſe, they hurt it greatly.—But, however credulous the primitive fathers may have been after their converſion in matters which favoured the cauſe they had eſpouſed, no man can imagine that the like credulity brought them over at firſt to the Chriſtian profeſſion; becauſe, in making the change, they had to combat with this very warmth of temper, from whence their credulity ſprang, operating ſtrongly in behalf of Heatheniſm; for, in embracing Chriſtianity, they acted in a direct oppoſition to the united force of their ſtrongeſt prejudices, to the full current of their moſt violent paſſions, and to every poſſible conſideration of intereſt. In ſuch circumſtances, their averſion to believe the facts contained in the Goſpels muſt have been as great as their propenſity to believe every thing favourable to the Chriſtian cauſe could poſſibly be after their converſion; and therefore nothing could determine them to profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, but the cleareſt evidence appearing on the ſide of the facts recorded in the Goſpels, which are the foundations of the Chriſtian religion.

Upon the whole, whatever caution is neceſſary to be uſed in reading the writings of the primitive fathers, where they explain the ſpeculative doctrines of Chriſtianity in conformity to their antient philoſophical notions, or argue in behalf of the Goſpels by topics drawn from that rhetoric which in their younger years they had been taught to admire, or declare their belief of the facts which conſpired with their zeal for propagating their religion, we may ſafely truſt to the judgement which before their converſion they paſſed upon the general evidence of Chriſtianity. In this part, the concluſion was forced upon them merely by the power of truth, not in conformity with, but in oppoſition to their ſtrongeſt paſſions, prejudices, and intereſts. Moreover, the particular abſurd ſentiments which they entertained through the prejudices of education, or the trifling arguments which they urged according to the eſtabliſhed mode, or their credulity with reſpect to ſuch matters as flattered their favourite paſſions after their converſion, ought no more to invalidate their teſtimony in points where they were under no ſuch influence, than the abſurd opinions or weak arguments of the moſt renowned philoſophers can diſcredit their teſtimony and judgement in matters where they were under no biaſs. In all caſes of this kind no more is requiſite, but to take notice of the tendency

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of a man's peculiarities, and to beware of haſtily receiving his reports concerning ſuch matters as, from his known prejudices without any evidence, may have appeared to him certain and indubitable.

Having ſo many teſtimonies furniſhed even by the Heathens themſelves, eſpecially by ſuch of them as lived in the age when Chriſtianity commenced, it cannot be doubted that our religion is as antient as we ſuppoſe; that it began in Judea, the country where our Lord preached, wrought miracles, was put to death, and roſe again from the dead; that multitudes there believed on him ſoon after his reſurrection; that from Judea the Chriſtian faith quickly ſpread itſelf into all the noted countries and cities of the Roman empire; that in theſe countries and cities numerous churches were early planted, more eſpecially in Aſia Minor, Greece, and Italy: In ſhort, that the number of the diſciples daily increaſed every where, till at length the whole Roman empire became Chriſtians.—It is equally certain, that from the very beginning the profeſſion of Chriſtianity expoſed men to the ſevereſt perſecution, firſt from the rabble, afterwards from the magiſtrates, whom it ſeems found it neceſſary to interpoſe, in order to hinder the ſpreading of the Chriſtian faith; that Claudius, who ſucceeded to the empire about ſeven years after our Lord's death, began the perſecution of the Chriſtians, by baniſhing them from Rome and Italy; that Nero, about thirty years after Chriſt's death, carried matters to a much greater length, putting vaſt multitudes of them to death, not in Rome only, but in the provinces; that the ſucceeding emperors imitated his example, iſſuing edicts againſt the Chriſtians in all parts of the empire, ſo that they were expoſed to every evil which human nature can ſuſtain. Finally, that in this ſtate matters continued for the ſpace of three hundred years, till Conſtantine, after the defeat of his rival Licinius, declared himſelf of the Chriſtian faith, and abrogated the laws of the former emperors againſt the diſciples of Jeſus. From theſe known and undoubted facts it follows, that the particulars told of the Founder of Chriſtianity in the Goſpels muſt be true, and that mankind had clear proofs laid before them of their truth; namely, the atteſtations of many credible eye-witneſſes, all concurring in the ſame reports, and who verified their teſtimony in that part which was moſt liable to exception, by performing miracles equal to thoſe which they aſcribed to their maſter, and by communicating to their converts the power of working miracles. The apoſtolical converts exerciſing this power, with the other gifts of the ſpirit, openly, became in all countries unqueſtionable vouchers of the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory, offering proofs thereof, which no reaſonable perſon who attended to them could reſiſt. Without ſuch arguments as theſe, it is impoſſible to conceive how a few ſtrangers in the loweſt ſtations of life, coming from a far diſtant deſpiſed nation, could have perſuaded multitudes of the Heathens every where to forſake the religions of their country, which were admirably adapted to gratify their ſenſual inclinations, for the ſake of another which brought along with it no temporal advantage whatever, but bound them up

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from all the ſenſual indulgences to which they had been accuſtomed, taught them to mortify their paſſions, ſet them at variance with their neareſt relations, and expoſed them to all manner of perſonal ſufferings. Without the divine power going along with their ſermons, it is ſtill more impoſſible to conceive how theſe men ſhould have prevailed upon the Heathens in ſuch numbers to reform their manners, after having long lived in habits of vice and ſenſuality. The reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian doctrines and precepts alone could never produce ſuch aſtoniſhing effects. Many of theſe, inſtead of appearing reaſonable, were downright ſtumbling-blocks both to Jews and Gentiles. Salvation through a crucified Saviour, the fundamental article of the Chriſtian faith, was ſuch to the philoſophers or men of reaſon; and the mortification of their luſts and paſſions would infallibly appear no other to men of pleaſure. A vain opinion of miracles, performed by the preachers of the Goſpel, could as little convert and reform the world in the circumſtances mentioned, if no miracles were really performed. Becauſe, however willing men may be, for the ſake of amuſement, to believe and repeat things marvellous, it never yet was found that any man for the pleaſure of believing and telling marvellous ſtories would part with his eſtate, his liberty, his life. The very ſuppoſition of ſuch madneſs is madneſs itſelf. In ſhort, the world could not have been converted under perſecution, unleſs the Chriſtian miracles, whereby the credibility of the Goſpel-hiſtory was demonſtrated, had been beheld in all countries, becauſe the performance of miracles in Aſia could never have convinced mankind in Greece, or Italy, or Spain. Wherever the Goſpel was received, it made its way by force of the miracles which the apoſtles and their diſciples performed in that very country, and by the influence of the ſpirit of God accompanying their ſermons.—Withal, as the age in which the Apoſtles convinced mankind of the truth of the Goſpel hiſtory, was remarkable for the height to which learning and the polite arts were carried, the faculties of men in that age muſt have been greatly improved by culture; wherefore, though in all countries the common people were firſt converted, they were well ſecured from being impoſed upon by falſe pretenſions of any kind, and could judge of the miracles which the Apoſtles wrought in ſupport of their teſtimony concerning Jeſus. But there were many likewiſe of better ſtation converted to Chriſtianity, proconſuls, ſenators, courtiers, magiſtrates, philoſophers, prieſts, whoſe education and character qualified them to examine with accuracy, and judge with certainty of the evidences of the Goſpel-hiſtory. I muſt therefore repeat it, that the converſion of ſo many thouſands in Judea, where our Lord exerciſed his miniſtry, and that immediately after his death, joined with the numerous early converſions of perſons of all ranks among the Heathens, is an argument for the truth of the Goſpel-hiſtory from fact, which it is not poſſible to gainſay: eſpecially as both Jews and Gentiles were converted in an enlightened age, and by their converſion expoſed themſelves to perſecution.—And though in the

writings of ſome of the Heathen philoſophers, converted to Chriſtianity, certain abſurd opinions, childiſh reaſonings and marks of credulity, are found, theſe things do not in the leaſt derogate from the teſtimony which by their converſion they bare to the facts in the Goſpel-hiſtory. The imperfections of which we ſpeak flowed from the prejudices of their education, or from the fervency of their zeal for the Chriſtian cauſe; neither of which could have any place in the matter of their converſion. For it is certain, that when the philoſophers renounced Gentiliſm and embraced the Goſpel, they acted in direct oppoſition to every weight whereby men's judgements can be ſwayed. If ſo, nothing could determine theſe men but the fulleſt, cleareſt, and moſt undoubted evidence both of ſenſe and reaſon. The converſion of the world, therefore, viewed in its various parts exhibits a very grand and ſtriking proof of the truth of the facts recorded in the Goſpel-hiſtory.

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DISSERTATION

CONCERNING

THE MAN OF SIN.

2 THESS. ii. 1—12.

IN a former diſſertation, the apoſtaſy of intelligent creatures from the kingdom of God was conſidered, in the moſt general view of it. At preſent, we are to enquire after an apoſtaſy, which (though not ſo general) is a moſt ſignal and remarkable one.

St. Paul planted the Chriſtian church at Theſſalonica. After he had left them, the Chriſtians of that place fell into a miſtake concerning the coming of the day of the Lord; imagining that the Apoſtle thought it to be juſt at hand. He ſuſpected the miſtake to have ariſen from ſome perſons affirming that he had ſaid ſo, miſinterpreting his former Epiſtle, or forging an Epiſtle under his name. To rectify that miſtake, ſeems to have been his principal view in writing his Second Epiſtle to them. In which he repeats what he had formerly taught them, concerning a grand apoſtaſy, which would, before that day, ariſe in the Chriſtian church; and, therefore, that great day muſt be at ſome conſiderable diſtance.

That this day of Chriſt cannot refer to his coming to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and of the Jewiſh nation, will be plain and evident; if we examine into the riſe and progreſs of this affair, as it now appears in theſe two epiſtles. 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, &c, the Apoſtle had admoniſhed the Chriſtians at Theſſalonica, not to lament over their deceaſed friends as they had done, when they were Heathens. To prevent which, for the future, he puts them in mind of the Chriſtian promiſe of a glorious reſurrection to endleſs life and happineſs. When that reſurrection will be, he alſo informed them; viz. at the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Then ſuch of the Chriſtians as ſhall be found alive on this earth ſhall be transformed; the dead raiſed; and the righteous admitted to complete and everlaſting felicity. Having mentioned "that coming of the Lord," or "of the "day of the Lord," he goes on with his diſcourſe, 1 Theſſ. v. 1. &c. aſſuring them, that it would come ſuddenly and ſurprizingly. And, as the particular time is unknown, men ought always to be prepared.—Now, if that day, "and the day (or coming) of the Lord," 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. &c. and v. 1, &c, ought to be underſtood of the day of judgement, that remarkable day, when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall deſcend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet

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of God; when the dead ſhall be raiſed and the living transformed, I think it evident, that it ought ſo to be underſtood in this place. For, of the ſame day, and of the ſame "coming of the Lord," St. Paul appears plainly to be ſpeaking in both theſe Epiſtles. And what may further confirm this is, that theſe phraſes "[that day, "the day, or the coming of the Lord,]" do, in other places of the New Teſtament, generally ſignify his coming to judge the world at the laſt day. [See on 2 Theſſ. ii. 2.] As, therefore, this is the uſual ſignification of theſe phraſes in other places of the New Teſtament, and the moſt evident meaning of them in theſe two Epiſtles to the Theſſalonians, we have no occaſion upon that account to look for "the man of ſin," and "the "grand apoſtaſy, before the "deſtruction of Jeruſalem;" as they are obliged to do, who underſtand this "coming of the Lord" to refer to his coming to the deſtruction of that city and the Jewiſh nation.

None of the ſeven following interpretations of this prophecy appear to me to be well-grounded.

I. Grotius would perſuade us, that Caius Caligula, the Roman emperor, was "the man of ſin," here propheſied of.—Whereas, according to the beſt chronologers, this Epiſtle was written about twelve years after the death of that emperor. [See the hiſtory prefixed to this Epiſtle.] This, therefore, could not be a prophecy of the folly and wickedneſs of Caligula *.

II. Dr. Hammond would have Simon Magus and the Gnoſtics to be here intended.—But Simon Magus had already ſhewed himſelf to be an enemy to Chriſtianity at Samaria; and, therefore, was not yet to be revealed. And, as to his conflict with St. Peter at Rome, and many of the doctor's ſtories about the Gnoſtics, they ſeem to be built upon too ſandy a foundation to deſerve much regard. Mr. Baxter, Dr. Whitby, Mr. Le-Clerc, Dr. Wall, and Mr. John Alphonſus Turretin, have abundantly confuted that interpretation.

Grotius's introducing Simon Magus, ver. 8, 9. ſeems to be as groundleſs. For the Apoſtle does there evidently continue to ſpeak of the ſame perſon which he had begun with, ver. 3. 4. And, if the whole prophecy could not agree, either to Caligula, or to Simon Magus and his deluded followers, Grotius ought not, in his interpretation, to have refered any part of it to either of them.

III. Others take the unbelieving Jews, who perſecuted the Chriſtians, before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and made many of them apoſtatiſe to Judaiſm, to be "the man of ſin," &c †.

Anſwer.] Though the unbelieving Jews perſecuted the Chriſtians, yet they were not united under one ſingle head or leader. They were never able to exalt themſelves above all that is called a God, or

* See this interpretation of Grotius more largely confuted in Dr. H. More's "Myſtery "of Iniquity," p. 445, &c. And by John Alphonſus Turretin, in his "Commentary on "this Epiſtle" Baſil. 1739.

† See Mr. La Roche's New Memoirs of Literature for September, 1726.

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even the imperial dignity. And I do not know that they ever attempted universal monarchy. Neither had they, after this, any one person among them, who answered the character here described; viz. "of one, who as a God, sitting in the temple of God, shewing "himself to be a God." Nor does St. Paul, by any means, appear to be "the person who obstructed," ver. 6, 7. For the unbelieving Jews persecuted the Christians after his conversion, as well as before it. Nor could he prevent the apostacy of the Jewish Christians; though he earnestly desired and attempted it. But his principal labours were among the Gentiles.

Besides; according to the prophecy of St. Paul, the apostacy was (in a great degree at least) to precede the revelation of the man of sin. Whereas the persecuting, antichristian spirit of unbelieving Jews was revealed, or manifested, before the apostacy of the Jewish Christians.—And, finally; it is a grand objection with me, against that interpretation, that, by the man of sin's appearing, and being revealed, is understood his perishing, or destruction. In as much as St. Paul has clearly distinguished his coming, and the continuance of his power, from the punishment and perdition, which will at last be inflicted on him by the Lord.

IV. Others, again, would have the unbelieving Jews who revolted from the Romans, together with the Jewish converts who apostatised from the Christian to the Jewish religion, to be the very persons here prophesied of.—Whereas the Apostle is here speaking of one sort of apostacy only; that is, an apostacy from the true religion. So the word ἀποστασία is used in other texts of scripture. And what may lead us to understand it so in this place is, that the Apostle is treating about matters of religion, and intimates that this apostacy would be carried on, and supported, by sham miracles, and all the deceit of unrighteousness; and that it would prevail only among vicious persons, such as relished not truth and goodness, but loved a lye, and took pleasure in unrighteousness.—The unbelieving Jews could could not apostatise fromthe Christian religion, because they had never embraced it. And the Jewish Christians, who did apostatise, had no eminent head, or leader, that deserved the name of "the "man of sin," &c.—Dr. Whitby, who is the most considerable advocate for this interpretation, plays between the two, and brings in the unbelieving Jews revolting from the Romans, or the Jewish Christians apostatising from Christianity, just as may best help out his hypothesis. But the prophecy itself is uniform, and describes one sort of an apostacy quite throughout.

The above-mentioned Turretin very justly objects various things against Dr. Whitby's hypothesis. (1.) That by "the man of sin" must be understood one man, or a series of men of the same rank and order; and not a whole nation. (2.) When it is said, "that "wicked one was to be revealed," it did not well suit that nation, which had now existed a long time, which had for some ages manifested great wickedness, and daily manifested it. (3.) Though the Scribes and Pharasees did arrogate to themselves a divine authority,

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and therefore might, in some sense, be said "to sit in the temple of "God;" yet the Apostle could not foretell that, as a future event. They did so already; and, for some time, had done so. Indeed, Dr. Whitby alledges, that the Apostle does not here foretell what would be, but speaks of what was already, as to that particular, the man of sin's siting in the temple of God.—But the series of the prophecy will not bear that interpretation. For, though he sometimes speaks in the present, he is all along to be understood in the future, tense: as we find the apostles and prophets often using the present for the future tense, in their predictions.

V. As Mahomet did never profess the Christian religion, he could not be called an apostate. However, as he caused many Christians to apostatise, and built his religion partly upon the ruin and corruption of Christianity, some have thought that he might, in some sense, be said "to sit in the temple of God." He was likewise "a man of sin," or a very wicked man. And, though he pretended to be a prophet; yet he shewed himself to be in reality no prophet, but a temporal potentate. And, finally, he arose after the downfall of the Roman empire; which I take to have been that which letted, or obstructed, the appearance of the man of sin.—All these things may be said in favour of that interpretation which represents this as a prophecy of Mahomet—But then, on the other hand, 1. Suppose St. John and St. Paul prophesied of the same event (as, I think, they did), it is evident that Rome must be the seat of the grand impostor; that is, the city which stood upon seven hills.—To this it is objected, "Constantinople stands upon seven hills. And therefore Mahomet might be intended. For his successor, the grand Turk, resides at Constantinople." To which it may be easily and justly answered, that, suppose Constantinople does stand upon seven hills, it is notorious that antient Rome did so likewise. And Constantinople is not the city, which, in St. John's time, "reigned over the kings of the earth." Whereas these two marks were both united in St. John's prophetic description of spiritual Babylon, the seat of that tyrannical power; where idolatry, persecution, and various sorts of wickedness, should abound. Rev. xvii. 9. 18. 2. It is a sufficient argument against applying this prophecy to Mahomet, that "the man of sin" was "to come after "the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders;" that is, with open and great pretensions to miracles. Whereas, though several miracles are ascribed to him, by the fabulous and legendary writers among the Mahometans; yet their learned men renounce them all. Nor does Mahomet himself, in his Koran, lay any claim to miracles *.

VI. Though Rome heathen opposed Christianity very much, and the emperors exalted themselves above all the kings and potentates upon earth; yet this their exaltation was not a thing then to be re-

* See Dr. Prideaux's "Life of Mahomet, p. 31;" and Mr. Sale's "Translation of Al "Koran, p. 203, 236, 473."

vealed;

vealed; neither did they apoſtatiſe from Chriſtianity, nor ſit in the temple of God, nor attempt to eſtabliſh their power by miracles.

VII. Some of the Papiſts interpret this apoſtaſy to be "the fall-"ing away of the Proteſtants from the church of Rome." And ſo, by a ſtrange legerdemain, the Proteſtants are to be "the man of ſin," or his forerunners at leaſt. Whereas it does not appear that there was a Chriſtian church at Rome, when St. Paul wrote "this ſecond "Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians." Nor are the Proteſtants united under one common and viſible head upon earth; nor do they pretend to eſtabliſh their doctrine by miracles.—Theſe and many other things plainly ſhew, that it is ridiculous to apply this prophecy to "the "Reformation from Popery."

As we have rejected theſe miſinterpretations, the next thing is to point out the apoſtle's meaning. And, however difficult it may appear upon a tranſient reading, we may venture to ſay, "that no "prophecy could have been more exactly accompliſhed, than this "has been, in the biſhop of Rome, and his adherents." And therefore, as it deſcribes them, and the whole of it ſuits them, and them alone, there is the greateſt reaſon to think it was intended to repreſent them; eſpecially as it is a remarkable and uncommon event, the like to which never happened before, and, moſt probably, never will happen again.

But let us go over the ſeveral parts of this propheſy.

Ver. 3. Before the coming of the day of the Lord, the Apoſtle foretold, that there would be "a falling away," or an apoſtaſy.—And, accordingly, what an amazing apoſtaſy from the true Chriſtian worſhip, doctrine, and practice, has happened in the church of Rome, and is to this day ſupported in and by that church! Inſtead of worſhiping God in ſpirit and in truth, they have introduced external pomp and numberleſs ceremonies, which ſtrike upon the ſenſes, and ſerve for amuſement, without making better the heart and the life.—Inſtead of worſhiping God, through Jeſus Chriſt, the only mediator between God and man, they have ſubſtituted the doctrine of dæmons, that is, of the ſpirits of men departed out of this life; who, as they pretend, intercede with God for us. And they invoke the Virgin Mary, and their other ſaints, more frequently than God himſelf.—They have not only ſucceeded Rome heathen, in the ſeat of empire, but have alſo apoſtatiſed to her imagery and idolatry, though they have diſguiſed it with new names and different pretenſions *.

Inſtead of the Chriſtian doctrine, they have apoſtatiſed from the faith; and, in many countries, have taken from the common people the free uſe of the Holy Scriptures, in their own mother-tongue; that they might with the more eaſe propagate their deluſions. For

* See "Dr. Middleton's Letter from Rome:" with which compare "Roma antiqua & "recens: Or the Conformity of antient and modern ceremonies; ſhewing, from indiſ-"putable teſtimonies, that the ceremonies of the Church of Rome are borrowed from the "Pagans. Written in French before 1666, tranſlated into Engliſh by James du Prè. "Lond. 1732."—See alſo "Sir Iſaac Newton's book on the Propheſies of Daniel and the "Apocalypſe," p. 204.

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they are againſt the Scriptures, becauſe they are conſcious the Scriptures are againſt them. They have ſubſtituted human power and authority, inſtead of reaſon and argument; and, in a forcible manner, reſtrained the liberty of private judgement; and then they have, with leſs difficulty, ſubſtituted, inſtead of the moſt excellent doctrine of the Goſpel, their own articles of faith, and the forged traditions and lying legends of their church. And, not content barely to promote ignorance, they have dared moſt impudently to commend it, by openly aſſerting it to be "the mother of devotion." —Their encouraging the apoſtacy in practice will be taken notice of when we come to explain the ſentences which follow.

The grand apoſtacy was to proceed gradually to its height. But, when it was come to ſuch a pitch, then was to be revealed one, who ſhould deſervedly be called "the man of ſin," becauſe of his very great wickedneſs; and "the ſon of perdition," becauſe of the great and exemplary puniſhment which ſhould at laſt befall him.

Though that phraſe, "the man of ſin," is in the ſingular number, yet it may denote a ſucceſſion of perſons, though but one at a time. So we ſay, "the king of Great Britain, the king of France, the emperor of Germany," &c. meaning thereby any one in the ſucceſſion of thoſe princes. So the Papiſts themſelves ſpeak of "the Pope," meaning thereby any one of the Popes. So the antients ſpoke of "the king of Egypt," and of "the king of Babylon." And ſo the Jews that uſed that phraſe, "the king of Iſrael;" meaning thereby any one in the ſucceſſion of their kings. [See Deut. xvii. 14—20. 1 Sam. viii. 11]. In exactly the ſame manner, the Jewiſh High-prieſt is ſpoken of as one perſon; though any one of the High-prieſts, in their ſucceſſion, was thereby plainly intended. [See Lev. xxi. 10. Numb. xxxv. 25—28. Joſh. xx. 6. Heb. ix. 7—25. and xiii. 11].

And to whom can the title of "the man of ſin" be more pertinently applied, than to the ſucceſſion of the biſhops of Rome, for many, many ages! There have been among them ſome of the vileſt of mankind, notorious for their fraud and treachery, cruelty and diſhoneſty, infidelity and debauchery, ſimony and covetouſneſs, and intolerable pride and ambition *.

But, beſides their own perſonal vices, by their indulgences, pardons, and diſpenſations, which they claim a power from Chriſt of granting, and which they have ſold in ſo infamous a manner, they have encouraged all manner of vile and wicked practices. Inſtead of teaching men the neceſſity of an holy temper and practice, they have countenanced all manner of wickedneſs; having contrived numberleſs methods to render an holy life needleſs, and to aſſure the moſt abandoned of mankind of ſalvation, without a thorough repentance and amendment, provided they will ſufficiently pay the prieſts for their abſolution †.

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* See Platina, Baronius, and Mr. Bower's Lives of the Popes.

† I have had the peruſal of "Laurence Banck's Taxa S. cancellariæ Romanæ, i. e. The "tax of the ſacred Roman chancery." And Mr. Bayle (in his Dictionary, under the article

The form of indulgences, a little before the Reformation, was so ample, that rich men were unconcerned what sins they committed; as knowing that they could, living or dead, purchase a pardon. For, suppose they neglected it during their lives, it was but leaving so much money, by their wills, after their deaths, for masses and indulgences, and they were assured that all would be forgiven them.—Can such notorious wickedness always escape, without an eminent perdition?

Banck, Laurence) hath given us the history of that remarkable book. In which there is a very particular account, how much money was paid into the Apostolic or Pope's chamber, for almost all sorts of vices. For instance; "He, who had been guilty of incest "with his mother, sister, or other relation, either in consanguinity or affinity, is taxed "at 5 gros. The absolution of him who has deflowered a virgin, 6 gros*. The absolution of him who has murdered his father, mother, sister, wife,—5 or 7 gros.

"The absolution and pardon of all acts of fornication, committed by any of the clergy, "in what manner soever, whether it be with a nun, within or without the limits of the "nunnery, or with his relations in consanguinity or affinity, or with his god-daughter, "or with any other woman whatsoever; and whether also the said absolution be given "in the name of the clergyman himself only, or of him jointly with his whores, with a "dispensation to enable him to take and hold his orders and ecclesiastical benefices, "and with a clause also of inhibition; costs 36 tournois, and 9, or 3 ducats.—And if, "besides the above, he receives absolution from sodomy, or bestiality, with the dispen"sation and clause of inhibition, as before, he must pay 90 tournois, 12 ducats, and 6 "carlins.—But, if he receives absolution from sodomy, or bestiality, only, with the dis"pensation or clause of inhibition, he pays only 36 tournois, and 9 ducats.

"A Nun, having committed fornication several times, within and without the bounds "of the nunnery, shall be absolved, and enabled to hold all the dignities of her order, "even that of Abbess, by paying 36 tournois and 9 ducats.

"The absolution of him who keeps a concubine, with dispensation to take and hold his "orders and ecclesiastical benefices, costs 21 tournois, 5 ducats, and 6 carlins."

This is a translation of the very words of the book itself; only the first articles to the * are wanting in one edition. However, these articles also are in the most perfect and correct editions.

This book has been several times printed, both in Popish and Protestant countries; and the Protestant princes inserted it among the causes of their rejecting the Council of Trent. When the Papists saw what use the Protestants made of it, they put it into the list of prohibited books. But then they condemned it, only upon the supposition of its having been corrupted by the (Protestants, or) Heretics.—But, let them suppose as much as they please, that it has been corrupted by heretics; the editions of it which have been published in Popish countries, and which the Papists cannot disown, as that of Rome, 1514, that of Cologn, 1515, those of Paris, 1520, 1545, and 1625, and those of Venice; one in the 4th vol. of "Oceanus juris," published 1513; the other in the fifteenth volume of the same collection, reprinted 1584.—These editions, I say, are more than sufficient to justify the reproaches of the Protestants, and to cover the church of Rome with confusion.—The Popish controvertists, who have not a word to say against the authority of the edition of Rome, or that of Paris, &c. are under great perplexity. However, since the Protestants have made so great an handle of this book, the Papists pretend that, though some of the Popes have been guilty of such infamous practices, and suffered such books to appear, yet the church of Rome in general abhors them. [A fine proof of the infallibility of their Popes!]

But the church of Rome has never shown, by the suppression of these taxes, that she has had them in abhorrence. They have been printed, as has been already observed, thrice at Paris, twice at Cologn, and twice at Venice. And some of these editions have been published since Claude d'Espence, a Popish doctor, exclaimed publickly against the enormities of this book.—The inquisition of Spain, and that of Rome, have condemned the book, only as they [pretend] it to have been corrupted by heretics.

I must add, that the suppression of such a work is not a sure sign of disapproving the rules which it contains. This may only signify that they repented of the publication of it, as it gave so fair an handle for the Protestants to reproach the court of Rome; and to wound the church of Rome through the sides of the Pope.—These ought to be esteemed mysteries of state, "arcana imperii," not fit to be divulged.

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How juſtly may preſent Rome, for her perſecution, idolatry, and other notorious wickedneſs, be called "myſtical Babylon;" and be ſpiritually (or figuratively) ſtyled "Sodom and Egypt" (the place where wickedneſs has ariſen to a moſt amazing height, and the people of God have been under a long and cruel bondage), "the "mother of fornications, and of the abominations of the earth?" Rev. xi. 8. and xvii. 5.

Ver. 4. "Who ſets himſelf in oppoſition to, and exalts himſelf "above, every one that is called a God, or even the imperial dig- "nity; ſo that he ſitteth in the temple of God, as it were a God; "ſhewing himſelf that he is a God."

Θεὸς, without the article, ſignifies a God. And here it is evidently diſtinguiſhed from, and oppoſed to, ὁ Θεὸς, "the Supreme "Deity, the one true God," in whoſe temple it is propheſied, the man of ſin would ſeat himſelf.

Princes and magiſtrates are, in Scripure, called Gods. And, in the Apoſtle's days σέβας was the Greek name or title for the Roman emperor. If, therefore, we underſtand, by σέβασμα, the imperial dignity, then the Apoſtle riſes in his diſcourſe, and propheſies, "that the man of ſin would exalt himſelf, not only above every "one that is commonly called a God upon earth, but even above "the majeſty and dignity of Cæſar, the Roman emperor himſelf, the "higheſt of all earthly Gods." And, as σέβασμα is connected with "every one that is called a God, it is moſt natural to underſtand it of the imperial dignity.

It was the opinion of ſeveral of the antients, that by the temple of God, where this tyrannical power would fix his ſeat of empire, is meant, not the temple at Jeruſalem, but the Chriſtian church. And, to confirm this interpretation, it may be obſerved, that, in other texts of the New Teſtament, the Chriſtian church is called "the temple of God," or compared to a temple. This prophetic intimation, that he would ſit in the Chriſtian church, may lead us to ſuppoſe, that he would profeſs himſelf a Chriſtian.

Now it is extremely eaſy to point out facts, which will fully anſwer this deſcription. For how proudly has the biſhop of Rome thus exalted himſelf, and been ſtyled, by his flatterers and abject dependents, "A God, who ought not to be called to an account; "the ſupreme deity on earth; king of kings, and lord of lords; by "whom princes reign, and upon whom the right of kings depends?" Nay, the gloſſator upon the canon law hath given him the high and blaſphemous title of "our Lord God, the Pope *." And the Popes have acted accordingly; abſolving ſubjects from their allegiance to their lawful princes, fomenting and raiſing rebellions, depoſing or murthering rightful princes, and, at pleaſure, ſeting up others in their ſtead. With what pride and haughtineſs have they called emperors, their vaſſals! and even obliged ſome of them to hold the bridle, till his holineſs, the Pope, has mounted his horſe! or to

* Vid. canon. Diſtinct. 96. c. ſatis evident.

bear up his train after him, when his holineſs has been pleaſed to walk in a pompous proceſſion! With what amazing inſolence have the Romiſh prieſts, with the approbation and encouragement of the Pope, fiercely oppoſed, and even whipt, ſovereign kings and princes! And the Pope has ſet his foot upon an emperor's neck.—He has claimed the ſole right of nominating, inveſting, or confirming, the princes and rulers of the earth.—If this be not to "exalt himſelf "above every one that is called a God," or even the emperor himſelf, there can be no event to anſwer this, or any prophecy whatever.

I am perſuaded that σέβασμα was intended to denote the imperial dignity. But, if we ſhould underſtand it (as ſome do) of the objects of, or things pertaining to, religious worſhip, the prophecy would, in that ſenſe, be verified by correſpondent events. For does not the Biſhop of Rome claim the ſole power of ordaining ſacraments, conſecrating altars and images, canonizing ſaints, and appointing what ſort of religious worſhip ſhall be paid, as well as to whom? Otherwiſe, how comes it to paſs, that the virgin Mary is more frequently invoked than the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt?—Is not this evidently a religious tyranny, founded in, and ſtill ſupported by, a pretence to religion? Other potentates have ſometimes called in religion for a pretence; and laid aſide that pretence, when their purpoſe has been ſerved: but no tyranny, beſides this, hath been entirely founded in, and all along carried on, merely by a pretence to religion.—And how exactly has the Apoſtle expreſſed this, when he foretold "that the man of ſin would ſit in the "temple of God, as a God?" i. e. under a religious pretence, he would lay claim to the power of a temporal monarch *. Under pretence of being the head of the catholic church, and (*in ordine ad ſpiritualia*) as having all ſpiritual power, he would thus exalt himſelf.—And I need not ſay that, under this colour, the Biſhop of Rome has claimed a moſt exorbitant power; and that herein "his kingdom is diverſe from all kingdoms." Dan. vii. 23. For other princes rule, in their own dominions, by their temporal power. But, under the notion of ſpiritual power, the Pope claims dominion in kingdoms and countries, where a foreign, temporal prince could have no claim. So that, though he does not pretend to be a God, or a mere temporal prince, yet he ſhews himſelf to be one, and has been, in reality, poſſeſſed of equal, or greater, power.

From the Proteſtants ſaying "that, by the temple of God, in this "prophecy, is meant the Chriſtian church;" Bellarmine would infer, "that then the church of Rome muſt be the church of God; "becauſe there the Pope ſitteth upon his throne." But the argument is vain and frivolous. And no more will thence follow, than that the church of Rome may be called the church of God, in the ſame ſenſe as "an adulterous woman" may be called a wife: [ſee Rev.

* Lactant. L. 7, § 17. Rex ille terrimus, ſed mendaciorum propheta, & ſeipſum conſtituet, & vocabit deum, &c.

xvii. 1. &c.]: or Jeruſalem, in our Saviour's days, might be called the holy city, [Matt. iv. 5.]: or, as the greateſt corruptions may retain the names, which were given in times of the gaeateſt ſimplicity and purity; ſo, among the ancient prophets, nothing was more uſual than to call the children of Iſrael, even when they were grievouſly revolted from God, by the name of "the people of God;" [Iſa. i. 3. and iii. 12. Jer. ii. 11; 13. and vi. 27, 28. and ix. 1—7. and xv. 7. and xviii, 15. Ezek. xiii. 10; 19. and xxi. 12. Hoſ. iv. 6. Amos vii. 8. Mic. vi. 2. 3. 5. Zeph. ii. 10.] "the faithful city," [Iſa. i. 21.]; "the vineyard of the Lord," [Iſa. v. 3. 7.]; "the ſervant of God," [Iſa. xli. 9.]; "the holy ſeed," [Iſa. vi. 13. and lxi. 9.]; "the choſen or elect people of God," [Iſa. xli. 8, 9. and xliii. 20, 21. and xlv. 45. and lxv. 9. 22. Jer. xxxiii. 24.]; "the beloved," [Jer. xi. 15.]; "the Lords's houſe, and "heritage, the dearly beloved of his ſoul, and his portion," [Jer. xii. 7—10.]; "the flock and paſture of the Lord," [Jer. xiii. 17. and xxii. 1—3, &c.]

Ver. 5. "Do not you remember, that, when I was yet with you "I told you theſe things?"] This prophecy was diligently inculcated upon the antients. St. Paul did not deviſe it to ſerve a turn: neither was it a new diſcovery at the time of writing this epiſtle. But he had taught it, to the Theſſalonians, among the firſt and moſt important truths of Chriſtianity. And now he repeats it to them, to ſatisfy them that this day of the Lord was not juſt at hand.

Ver 6. "And you know what now obſtructeth, that he might "be revealed in his own proper ſeaſon"]. From St. Paul's cautious and covert manner of ſpeaking, leſt he ſhould offend the then reigning powers *, as well as from other arguments, it is highly probable that the Roman emperor was the obſtructing power. And it is remarkable, that, upon that very account, the primitive Chriſtians uſed to pray for the continuance of the Roman empire †.

Tertullian (who flouriſhed about the concluſion of the ſecond century) ſaith, "Even now the myſtery of iniquity is working: only "he, who obſtructeth, will obſtruct, until he be taken out of the "way. Who is this, but the Roman empire, whoſe diviſion into "ſo many kingdoms will bring on Antichriſt? And then ſhall that "wicked one be revealed," &c ‡. Jerome [on Daniel] ſays, "It "was the general opinion, that, towards the end of the world, ten "kings ſhould ſhare the Roman empire; and that Antichriſt ſhould "be the eleventh, and overcome all." And §, when he heard that Rome was taken by Alaricus the Goth, he ſhewed plainly that he expected the appearance of Antichriſt, upon the removal of the Roman empire; and wondered that it was not more ſpeedy. "For

* Vid. Auguſtin. de civ. Dei, l. 20. c. 19.

† See Dr. Geddes's Eſſay upon the Roman empire, &c. Vol. III. p. 26. of his tracts, Tertullian. Apol. c. 32, 39.

‡ Vid Tertull. de reſurrect. carn. c. 23. Lactant. L. 7. § 16.

§ Ad Geront. de monogam.

(ſays he) he, that hindered, is taken out of the way; and yet we do not underſtand that Antichriſt approaches."—Almoſt all the fathers of the Chriſtian church were of this opinion, viz. that the Roman empire was the obſtructing power *. And we may eaſily conceive how the antients came by this interpretation; even though they lived ſo long before the accompliſhment. St. Paul had told it to the Theſſalonians; and would (no doubt) as freely tell it to other Chriſtian churches. And, when any of the Chriſtians, in the neighbourhood of Theſſalonica, read this epiſtle (if they did not know it before), they would, out of a very natural and innocent curioſity, enquire of the Theſſalonians, what was intended by the obſtructing power? And the Theſſalonians would as readily impart the knowlege thereof to them.—St. John alſo did afterwards [Rev. thirteenth and ſeventeenth chapters] confirm this opinion. And, from theſe things, very probably, it ſpread, till it became (as Jerome calls it) the general opinion among the Chriſtians.

Ver. 7. "For the myſtery of iniquity is now working: only "there is one, who obſtructeth, until he be taken out of the "way."

It is impoſſible for us to know more of the tendency towards this grand apoſtacy, in the days of the apoſtles, or primitive Chriſtians, than they have mentioned in their writings. Hymenæus and Alexander ſubverted the Chriſtians, by teaching falſe doctrines, Diotrephes aſpired after the pre-eminence, Demas overloved this preſent world. Others were of a factious, ſchiſmatical ſpirit: ſeparating themſelves from true Chriſtians; being ſenſual, not having the ſpirit. Others were with difficulty kept from oppoſing the higher powers; being ſelf-willed; deſpiſing government; and ſpeaking evil of dignities. Some were condemned for making a gain of godlineſs; and preaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake. Others were for having Chriſtians eat of meats offered to idols, and ſo encouraged ſome degree of idolatry. There were ſeveral falſe appearance of the apoſtles, and deceitful workers, who transformed themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt. Some pretended to philoſophy; and, by a vain deceit, would have exalted the traditions of men above the ordinances of Chriſt. Some, through a falſe humility, fell into will-worſhip, and particularly into the worſhip of angels. Some were for multiplying rites and ceremonies; and placed their religion very much in a diſtinction between meats and drinks; or between days and weeks, months and years; as if ſome were holy; others common, or unholy. Whereas "the Chriſtian religion conſiſteth "not in meats and drinks; but in righteouſneſs, and peace, and "joy in the Holy Spirit." There were ſome diſpoſed to live in idleneſs, officiouſly meddling with the concerns of other perſons, or families; and (like begging monks and friers) living upon the labour and induſtry of other people. Others inculcated a ſuperſtitious

* See Mede's Works, p. 656, &c.

morti-

mortification of the body, forbidding of marriage, and enjoining abſtinence from ſeveral things which God allows us to make uſe of. Doctrines were contrived to render an holy life needleſs; and orthodoxy, or faith without works, was repreſented as ſufficient to juſtify and ſave men. Others denied "that Chriſt had a real body, "or really ſuffered and died; or that Jeſus, who came in the fleſh, "was the Chriſt." From ſuch corruptions of Chriſtianity it was that St. John declared, "There were, even then, many Antichriſts." And, finally, ſome pretended to prove things by oral tradition, or letters forged under the names of the Apoſtles, to ſpread their falſe doctrine with greater ſucceſs.—As we know what the apoſtacy is at its height, it is eaſy to ſee how ſeveral of the corruptions in the primitive church made way for it, or were ſomewhat of the ſpirit of the man of ſin, or the myſtery of iniquity then working.—According to this part of the prophecy, it is well known that they have not arrived to their grand corruption but ſtep by ſtep, and at the firſt by ſlow and almoſt inſenſible degrees.

Ver. 8. "And then ſhall be revealed that wicked one."]—And it is notoriouſly evident, that the removal of the Roman emperor did make way for the advancement of the Biſhop of Rome to his power and grandeur. Then was that wicked one ſignally revealed.

Ὁ ἄνομος, "that lawleſs perſon."] How proper a title for him who has been declared "to be ſubject to no law? but that he can, "by the plenitude of his power, make right wrong, and wrong "right; virtue vice, and vice virtue? that he can diſpenſe with "all laws, human and divine, and that he may do all things above "law, without law, and againſt law."

And what amazing wickedneſs hath been committed under the protection and encouragement of the Pope! Witneſs the infamous Croiſadoes, and the cruel maſſacres of the Albigenſes and Waldenſes, of whom they are ſaid to have ſlain a million. [See Mede's works, p. 503]. In a little above thirty years from the firſt founding of the order of Jeſuits, above eight hundred thouſand of the Proteſtants were put to death.—That cruel blood-hound, the duke of Alva, boaſted "that, by his means, in the Netherlands, thirty-ſix "thouſand were ſlain by the hand of the executioner only." And, beſides thoſe, great numbers periſhed ſeveral other ways. (See Mede's works, p. 504). The horrible and infernal court of inquiſition has conſumed numberleſs multitudes of the beſt of mankind by various kinds of torments; and ſtill remains in Spain and Portugal, in ſome parts of Italy, and in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, the invention of incarnate devils, an hell upon earth, the terror of human nature, to hinder all free enquiry and examination, to keep mankind in the moſt profound ignorance, and in the moſt ſlaviſh ſubjection to an hierarchy of inſolent, lazy, domineering, and debauched prieſts *.

The

* Whoever would ſee a faithful and authentic account of the riſe, progreſs, and laws of the inquiſition, and of the various tortures and inhuman treatment that ſuch as differ from

The cruel purſuing, impriſoning, torturing, and burning the martyrs, here in England, and the horrid and prodigious maſſacres in France and Ireland, cannot ſurely ever be forgotten. No benevolent perſon can read the account, at this diſtance of time, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart.

Perſecution is a diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of that apoſtate, [See More's Myſtery of Iniquity, p. 166, &c.] If to "wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High" [Dan. vii. 25.], and to "ſlay ſuch as are witneſſes for true religion" [Rev. xi. 7, 8.]; if "to make war with the ſaints, "and frequently to prevail againſt them, and overcome them" [Rev. xiii. 4—7.]; "and to be drunk with the blood of the ſaints, "and of the martyrs of Jeſus;" [Rev. xvii. 6.]—if theſe things, I ſay, can poſſibly be accompliſhed; they have been, and ſtill are, accompliſhed by the treacherous, cruel, and tyrannical church of Rome.

Ver. 8. "(Whom the Lord will conſume, by the breath of his "mouth; and will deſtroy, by the brightneſs of his coming:")—Theſe words muſt be conſidered as thrown in by way of parentheſis: or elſe his deſtruction, mentioned in this verſe, will be placed before his coming and the manner of it, mentioned in the next verſe. —And this account of his final deſtruction was very opportunely thrown in, to comfort the minds of the Theſſalonians, and other Chriſtians, under ſuch a dark proſpect, by aſſuring them, that this apoſtacy and tyranny ſhould unqueſtionably come to an end, and truth and righteouſneſs finally prevail and triumph.

As the laſt ſentence was inſerted by way of parentheſis, we may go on with the principal ſubject as if it had not been inſerted.

Ver. 9—12. When the obſtructing power is removed;—"then "ſhall be revealed that wicked one, whoſe coming is after the work-"ing of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and wonders of a lye; "and with every unrighteous deceit, among thoſe that periſh; be-"cauſe they have not entertained the love of the truth, that they "might be ſaved. And, for this reaſon, will God ſend them the "energy of error, that they might believe a lye; that they all may "be condemned, who have not believed the truth, but have taken "pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs."

The many pretences to miracles, in the church of Rome, have abundantly confirmed this *. They have aſſerted that churches

from the church of Rome there undergo, let them read "Limborch's Hiſtory of the In-"quiſition," tranſlated into Engliſh by Mr. Chandler. As alſo Isaac Martyn's and Mr Couſtos's account of their own ſufferings in the inquiſition. And Dr. Geddes's "Brief ac-"count of the Inquiſition," in his Tracts.

Becauſe we are free from ſuch perſecution, we are apt to fancy that Popery is now grown an innocent and harmleſs thing; but Mr. Archibald Bower, who is now here in England, writing "the Lives of the Popes," can inform us better. He was counſellor to the inquiſition at Macereta in Italy; there diſcerned the errors of Popery; was ſhocked with the inſtances of cruelty which his own eyes beheld, thereupon determined to leave that falſe, cruel, and perſecuting church; and, with difficulty, reached this land of liberty.—Every new and well-atteſted account of their more than helliſh cruelty would (one would hope) help to pull down that antichriſtian kingdom.

* See More's Myſtery of Iniquity, p. 133, &c.

have

have been taken up in one place, and carried through the air into diſtant countries; that images have nodded, ſmiled, frowned, or ſpoken, upon occaſion; that the firſt convert, which St. Gaul made in Switzerland, was a bear *; that St. Anthony of Padua preached to a vaſt aſſembly of fiſhes, which he had miraculouſly called together, and which devoutly heard him preach the word of the Lord †; that St. Francis preached, with great ſucceſs, to birds and beaſts, which he thought our Lord had commanded, when he ordered his Apoſtles "to go into all the world, and to preach the Goſpel to every "creature."

Numberleſs have been the fictitious apparitions of the ſouls of dead men, in order to prove ſuch a ſtate as purgatory. Nay, to prove this, what have they not pretended to? voices from heaven or hell, cures at the ſhrines of the ſaints, or by their bones or reliques, to which they have ſometimes aſcribed the power of raiſing perſons from the dead! All the legends and lying wonders, which the moſt diabolical invention could contrive, have been made uſe of, to found or ſupport this notorious apoſtacy.

The church of Rome pretends, at this day, to the power of working miracles; and holds this to be one of the marks of the true church. Whereas the pretence to miracles, now-a-days, is one mark of the falſe church, or one reaſon for ſuſpecting her to be that antichriſtian faction which "would come after the working of Satan, with all "power, and ſigns, and lying wonders, and with all the deceit of "unrighteouſneſs," &c.

Chriſtianity was ſufficiently atteſted by the miracles which were worked when it was firſt planted in the world, and wants not miracles to be worked now, to prove and ſupport it. Only allow men full liberty to examine, and well-diſpoſed perſons will diſcern that Chriſtianity is of divine original. But falſe doctrines and an apoſtate church will for ever want new proofs and freſh ſupports.

Some have ſuppoſed that, by lying wonders, the apoſtle meant true miracles, but worked in ſupport of a lye. Others have underſtood them to be here called lying, or falſe miracles ‡. And I am much inclined to think that they are all lying miracles, which are pretended to, in ſupport of falſe doctrines or wicked practices. For it is hard to ſuppoſe that God would ſet his ſeal to a lye §. And, as to the miracles of the church of Rome, the fact has been, that, where men have had liberty freely to examine them, they have been detected as mere forgeries ‖.

* See Addiſon's Travels, p. 284.

† See Addiſon's Travels, p. 47, &c. where you will find the very ſermon itſelf.

‡ Auguſtin. de civ. Dei, L. 20. c. 19.

§ See what Dr. Sykes has ſaid, in his book on miracles, to ſhew that what the magicians of Egypt pretended to do, by their inchantments, was all artifice and deluſion.

‖ See John Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. II. p. 330. Dr. Geddes's tracts, vol. III. p. 35. &c.

And

And by all the deceit of unrighteouſneſs, &c.] How remarkably have they fulfilled this part of the prediction? They have appeared as the profeſſed and beſt friends of Chriſtianity, and confidently aſſerted, "that theirs is the only true church;" whilſt they have in reality been its greateſt enemies *.—They have repreſented as martyrs, men and women, who never had any exiſtence; and canonized for ſaints, fictitious perſons, Heathens, and the moſt flagitious of ſinners. They have conſecrated murthers, aſſaſſinations, maſſacres, treaſons, and rebellions; by promiſing their votaries, that they ſhould not paſs through the fire of purgatory, but have an immediate entrance into heaven, if they ſhould be cut off in perpetrating ſuch black and horid crimes.

They have made great uſe of ſchool-divinity; by ſpecious, ſophiſtical argument, defending even tranſubſtantiation itſelf; confounding the underſtandings of weak men by their ſubtleties; and arguing them out of their ſenſes; They have forged ſome books; and interpolated, or caſtrated, ſuch books as are genuine; or done all in their power to ſuppreſs them, according as they have apprehended they have affected them, or their unrighteous cauſe. They have repreſented apochryphal books as canonical; and have either hindered the canonical books of ſcripture from being fairly tranſlated, and freely read in the mother tongue; or they have made ſuch tranſlations as would beſt ſerve their own purpoſe. They have left out the ſecond commandment, becauſe it condemns their idolatry. They have likewiſe done all they could to puzzle and confound the meaning of ſome texts; and have given falſe gloſſes and amazing interpretations of other texts.—They have conferred great riches, honors, and dignities, on thoſe who have fallen-in with, and ſupported, their worldly views. And the terrors and cruelties, which they have exerciſed upon ſuch as have oppoſed them, have been already taken notice of.

They have pretended to the power of the keys, or of binding and looſing. They have claimed full power and authority to pardon and abſolve, or to cenſure and condemn, to open the gates of heaven to mankind, or to ſhut them againſt them, at their pleaſure; and have repreſented Almighty God as bound to ſtand to their determinations.—In conſequence thereof, they have pardoned and abſolved ſome of the moſt flagrant villains; and have condemned, to the pit of hell, ſome of the moſt innocent, moſt holy, and moſt excellent perſons, that ever lived.

It would be endleſs to mention all their pious frauds, and ſpecious, aſtoniſhing methods, to increaſe their numbers, to draw-in the worſt of men, and to diſcourage the beſt, in order to gratify their ex-

* Lactant. L. 7. § 19. "Hic eſt autem, qui appellatur Antichriſtus, ſed ſe ipſe Chriſtum mentietur, & contra verum dimicabit," &c. This is he, who is called Antichriſt; "but he will feign himſelf to be Chriſt, and will fight againſt him, &c." How remarkably applicable are theſe words to the biſhop of Rome, who lays claim to the title of "the ſucceſſor of St. Peter, the vicar of CHRIST upon earth;" and, conſequently, to be the head of the church, and the father and paſtor of the faithful? See the Popiſh catechiſm, chap. the laſt.

orbitant

orbitant luſt of riches and ambition, worldly dominion and grandeur. Well might the Apoſtle repreſent them as practiſing every unrighteous deceit.

But who muſt be their converts? That alſo the Apoſtle has plainly told us; viz. "Such as are loſt [loſt to all ſenſe of virtue "and goodneſs], who have not entertained the love of the truth; "ſuch as willingly believe and embrace a lye, and take pleaſure "in unrighteouſneſs."—And among ſuch, it is juſt with God to ſuffer the energy of error to be exerted, to let them take their own way, and to periſh in their own deluſion. For muſt not men have caſt off the love of truth, and have loſt all reliſh for it, who can delight in their fabulous traditions and lying legends; and tamely give up the ſcriptures, or ſpeak of them with contempt?

Thus have I gone through every part of this prophecy, and ſhewn (I hope) that no prophecy can be more exactly accompliſhed.

OBJECTION. It may poſſibly be thought, by ſome, to be an objection to this interpretation, "that St. Paul has taken "no notice of this prophecy, in his epiſtle to the Romans; "though Rome was the very place where the man of ſin was "to appear."

ANSWER. The church of Rome was not then planted. However, St. Paul did afterwards evidently caution that church againſt apoſtacy; and acquaint them, if they apoſtatiſed, what their end would be. [Rom. xi. 17—22.]. That was as much as he thought fit to ſay in that epiſtle; as he had not planted the Chriſtian church there; nor ever been, at that time, in perſon among them.

But there are four particulars, which appear to me to afford a fair and full anſwer to this objection. (1.) When St. Paul wrote the epiſtle to the Romans, the Chriſtians at Rome had not fallen into the miſtake, concerning the ſpeedy coming of the day of the Lord. And, therefore, there was not the ſame occaſion of taking notice to them, that the man of ſin would appear, and a grand apoſtacy happen before that day. (2.) The Apoſtle was cautious in deſcribing the power, which obſtructed the revelation of the man of ſin. He would not mention it, in writing to the Theſſalonians; much leſs, ſurely, in writing to Rome, the very ſeat of empire, eſpecially as he muſt have ſpoke out, in writing to Chriſtians who had never ſeen him; or elſe they could not have underſtood him. Whereas, in writing to the Theſſalonians, he could ſay, "Do not you remember that, when I was with you, I told you "theſe things? And you know what now obſtructeth, &c." (3.) Though the apoſtolic epiſtles were written to ſome particular churches, and more exactly ſuited their caſe; yet they were ſpread among the other churches, and received, and publickly read by them, as containing matters of common concern. And of what moment was it, whether the Chriſtians at Rome read this prophecy, in

the

the second epistle to the Thessalonians, or in an epistle directed and sent, in the first place, to Rome? As the Apostle had published this prophecy, among the Christians, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, before it appears that there was any Christian church at Rome, he had no occasion to write it, in a letter to that imperial city, afterwards. It was enough to send them a copy of the second epistle to the Thessalonians. (4.) When the Apostle came in person to Rome (as he did, once or twice, after writing his epistle to the Romans), he would as freely and readly impart this prophecy to the Christians there, as he had done to the Thessalonians, and to other churches.

Let us now conclude this dissertation, with mentioning some corollaries from what has been said,

I. The visible church may err, and fall into a dreadful apostacy.

So it did under the Old Testament, [1 Kings, eighteenth and following chapters; and particularly, 1 Kings xix. 10. 2 Kings xvi. 1, &c.]. And the prophets frequently upbraided the people of God, for their defection and revolt from God. [See Isa. i. 1, &c. Jer. i. 16. &c. and many other places of the Old Testament]. And the Christian church is so far from being exempt, that a most grievous apostacy and defection therein is foretold expressly both here and elsewhere.

II. From what has been said, it is easy to judge concerning Popery and the Reformation.

It is not the largeness of a church, nor her external pomp and splendor *, which makes her the true church; nor are they always the schismatics, who are the fewest in number. No! suppose most of the nations of the earth should agree together in maintaining absurd doctrines, superstitious worship, immoral and unreasonable practices, uncharitableness, and impositions; they would be the heretics and schismatics. And let the number, who separate from them, in defence of truth, virtue, liberty, and charity, be never so few; they would, in reality, be the true church; and, as such, be approved of God: whilst the other would deserve no other name, but that of a grand schism, or worldly faction, even though their party were as numerous, as that with the soles of their feet they could dry up rivers.

Holding the truth in love is a mark of the true church; and such, as forsake this, are apostates. Such is the schism, faction, and apostacy of the present church of Rome, that fruitful mother of idolatries and of the abominations of the earth. And reformation is a most glorious thing, when founded upon its right basis of reason and scripture, liberty and charity.

III. "How strong an argument may what has been said afford "us, for the truth of the Christian religion?"

Here was a signal event foretold, and that many ages before it came to pass; an event, the like to which had never happened,

* See the appendix to the Popish catechism, § 2.

since

ſince the creation of the world; and, moſt probably, there never will happen ſuch another. It was, therefore, an event which was out of the reach of all human conjecture, or foreſight. And yet experience hath ſhown that the prediction was exact.—Neither enthuſiaſts nor impoſtors could poſſibly have gueſſed ſo agreeably to ſo uncommon an event. Nor can we, who have lived to ſee and know ſo much of the accompliſhment, deſcribe this apoſtacy in a more conciſe, juſt, or lively manner, than St. Paul hath here done, in a few verſes; and St. John, more largely, in the Revelations—They therefore, muſt have been true prophets, or elſe they never could have delivered ſuch remarkable predictions, which time and fact have ſo amazingly verified.

Some other arguments for the truth of the Chriſtian religion, though juſt and concluſive, may be of a more ſubtile and difficult nature. But the riſe and progreſs of this apoſtacy is a fact; a plain, notorious, and well-known fact: an argument, which cannot eaſily be evaded; but muſt ſtrike the virtuous and attentive!—All church-hiſtory, for ſeveral paſt centuries, is full of it. And we need only open our eyes, and we may behold too much of it. For the man of ſin is even now upon his throne; exalting himſelf, as much as he can, above all the kings of the earth; and with ſuch ſtrong deluſions ſeducing the nations, as to make many of them to believe a lye.

They may pretend, among us, that Popery is altered, and become a meek and harmleſs religion. They may miſrepreſent it's tenets, and alledge that they have now thrown off that perſecuting ſpirit, which they have formerly diſcovered *. But is not tranſubſtantiation one of her doctrines? and does not the helliſh court of inquiſition ſtill ſubſiſt in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and other Popiſh countries? And the repeated perſecutions of the Proteſtants in France, Germany, and other places, are ſufficient to convince us that the church of Rome, where ſhe has power, is ſtill the ſame perſecuting church, and her religion the ſame bloody religion. as ever; and, though dreſſed up in ſheep's cloathing, ſhe is no other than a ravenous wolf.

Our anceſtors felt the tremendous effects of her perſecuting power, and experienced her tender mercies to be the moſt dreadful cruelty. Nay, we ourſelves were in eminent danger; but, by a very merciful interpoſition of the divine providence, the ſnare was broken, and we moſt happily eſcaped. Yet all pious and benevolent perſons are daily mourning over this antichriſtian corruption and tyranny; and ready to ſay; "How long, O Lord, holy, juſt, and

* Eſtius, in 1 Johan. v. 21. having repreſented the danger there was, of the firſt Chriſtians falling into ſome acts of idolatry, practiſed among their Heathen neighbours, adds, "Nunc (ah dolor!) nonnulli catholici, habitantes inter hæreticos, rerum per diverſas "provincias potientes, interdum quædam faciunt, aut dicunt, fidei catholicæ, aut "inſtitutis eccleſiæ, diſſentanea." So that the Papiſts diſguiſing and miſrepreſenting, in Proteſtant countries, the doctrines and practices of the Romiſh church is no new thing; as is here plainly teſtified, and lamented, by one of their own communion.

true,

true, wilt thou not deliver thine elect, who cry unto thee, day and night?

Chriſtianity is a religion reaſonable and excellent in itſelf; promotes the pureſt and moſt exalted virtue, was at firſt planted by inſpiration and miracles; and here is a moſt remarkable prophecy, which, after ſo many hundred years, is exactly verified by a notorious event.—What evidences would be ſufficient, where all theſe are rejected?

IV. We ought not to be ſhocked at the preſent ſtate of the Chriſtian church, becauſe the Apoſtles of our bleſſed Lord propheſied that ſuch it would be.

Though the beſt things are liable to corruption; yet one would hardly have thought it poſſible, that ſo great, ſo notorious a corruption could (by any pretence) have ſprung out of the Chriſtian religion. Look into the New Teſtament, which contains the religion of Jeſus; and look into the doctrine, diſcipline, and worſhip, the whole polity and conſtitution, of the church of Rome; and you may eaſily perceive that light and darkneſs are not more oppoſite. The doctrine of Chriſtianity is all rational, its worſhip free from ſuperſtition and idolatry, and it's laws require the greateſt virtue and purity. But the doctrine of the church of Rome is abſurd, her worſhip overrun with ſuperſtition and idolatry. And that wicked church (which ſchiſmatically calls herſelf the cartholic and only true church) hath invented ſo many arts to make men very religious, without any virtue or true goodneſs, that (wherever it is eſtabliſhed and prevails) it encourages almoſt all manner of wickedneſs and abominations.

Daniel propheſied *, that the God of heaven would erect a kingdom, which ſhould be ſubject to the ſon of man. And we ſay "that this kingdom of righteouſneſs was actually erected by our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Now, upon looking abroad, into a great part of Chriſtendom, it is natural to enquire, "Is this the kingdom, which Daniel propheſied of?"—No! to prevent the anxiety, and diſtreſs, which might ariſe in the minds of true Chriſtians, from ſuch a dark and gloomy appearance, it was alſo propheſied that, out of this ſpiritual kingdom, there would ariſe one of the greateſt apoſtacies and corruptions that ever appeared in the world; though true Chriſtianity, as contained in the Scriptures, has all along been invariably the ſame.

V. "How ought we to rejoice, that this unrighteous and tyran-"nical power ſhall come to an end? and think ourſelves obliged "(from a ſenſe of duty to God, and of benevolence to mankind) "to do every thing in our power, towards bringing about ſo happy "an event?"

Bleſſed be God that we are delivered from this worſe than Egyptian darkneſs and ſlavery. Particularly, let us reflect with gratitude, upon our narrow and almoſt miraculous eſcape, at the ever-memora-

* Dan. ii. 44. and vii. 13. 14.

ble

the Revolution, under the auſpicious conduct of the glorious prince of Orange, King WILLIAM of immortal memory: which (by the favor of a kind and watchful Providence) laid the foundation of a later eſcape; when by the contrivance of a perſecuting, reſtleſs, and bigoted faction, a Popiſh pretender was ready to aſcend the throne. Then it was, that king William's noble legacy took place, by the coming in of the illuſtrous houſe of Hanover; a family, which were among the firſt Proteſters againſt Popery, and who have ever ſince continued Proteſtants: and (which has been, in a diſtinguiſhing manner, the glory of that illuſtrous houſe, and attended with the greateſt and moſt diffuſive bleſſings) they have, upon many occaſions, been ſtrenuous aſſertors of the liberties of mankind, both civil and religious.

The happy effects of this they themſelves ſaw and experienced during the rebellion, 1745, when their enemies were intimidated, by the remarkable zeal and number of their friends; when perſons of all ranks and orders, and of almoſt all ſects and parties, ſo zealouſly entered into aſſociations againſt a Popiſh, abjured pretender, and his highland banditti; and in the ſupport of our Proteſtant royal family in the poſſeſſion of the Britiſh crown.—Bleſſed be God for ſuch a royal family; and let all the people ſay, Amen! May they and their deſcendents continue friends to mankind throughout all coming generations; and experience the joys and ample bleſſings which attend the ſincere love of truth, virtue, religion, and liberty!

It is ſaid that this corrupt and perſecuting religion gains ground in this Proteſtant nation; and even in this day of light, liberty, and freedom of inquiry. But, ſurely, this muſt proceed from ſome neglect among Proteſtants. And what madneſs muſt poſſeſs ſuch as would bring us back again into this ſpiritual Egypt, when all wiſe men would carefully avoid her crimes, for fear of at laſt partaking in her plagues!

It is the duty of parents and tutors, in the education of children; and of miniſters, in the inſtructions which they give to their people; diligently to train them up in the true principles of the Proteſtant religion. And it is the duty of all Proteſtants to give up whatever abſurd doctrines, or impoſing principles, they may have hitherto mixed with what is truly reaſonable and Chriſtian. Till theſe things be done, it muſt be expected that Popery will always be thruſting in its cloven foot among us.

Thanks be to God, that we have the Scriptures ſo common, not only in the original, but in our own language; that we are allowed the liberty of private judgement, and bleſſed with ſo many, and ſuch excellent helps to underſtand our Bible! that ſuch a ſpirit of liberty and free enquiry hath, in this laſt age, gone out into the land! May kind heaven diffuſe this happy ſpirit every where, and grant it the moſt laſting duration!

It is not three hundred years ſince our anceſtors were required to believe the groſſeſt abſurdities, and to practiſe the moſt flagrant ſu-

perſtition and idolatry; and that upon pain of forfeiting all that was dear to them in this world, and of being ſentenced to eternal damnation in the world to come.—Though the firſt Reformers made a noble ſtand, and went great lengths, in a little time; yet they could not ſhake off one of the worſt parts of Popery, viz. the ſpirit of infallibility and perſecution. And a race of tyrannical kings, ſupported by covetous and ambitious prieſts, continued to practiſe, upon their fellow-proteſtants, that cruelty, which all Proteſtants ſo much and ſo juſtly exclaimed againſt, when practiſed by Papiſts upon themſelves. By theſe means, it has come to paſs that true liberty and free enquiry are but of yeſterday, a bleſſing reſerved by Providence for us!

The moſt acceptable way of teſtifying our gratitude to Almighty God, for ſo great, ſo ineſtimable a bleſſing, is to ſtudy the Scriptures with care and diligence; and to form our faith and worſhip, our temper and practice, accordingly; freely to allow others that liberty of private judgement, which we ourſelves ſo ardently and reaſonably deſire; to avoid uncharitableneſs towards ſuch as differ from us; and to ſhew our good-will even to the perſons of the Papiſts, whilſt we ſo much and ſo juſtly abhor their religion. Let us do all we can to carry on the reformation to greater purity and perfection; and particularly take care to watch againſt a narrow, bigoted, perſecuting ſpirit, in all the branches and degrees of it. Let us lay the ſtreſs in religion where reaſon and ſcripture have laid it (not in abſtruſe notions and unintelligible ſubtleties, not in forms and ceremonies of human invention, nor in an empty profeſſion of the pureſt and beſt religion in the world; but) upon the ſincere love of God and of one another; upon a due government of our paſſions, affections, and appetites; and the habitual love and practice of univerſal holineſs. For what avails it, what church any man belongs to, what advantages he enjoys, or what profeſſion of religion he makes, if he does not love God and keep his commandments; if he abuſes his liberty to licentiouſneſs; and, in the midſt of ſuch marvellous light, manifeſts that he prefers darkneſs, by leading a wicked life; which, of all others, is the blackeſt hereſy, or the moſt flagrant and moſt notorious corruption and apoſtaſy?

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

HISTORY

OF THE

RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST, &c.

§ 1. JOHN, Chap. xx.

" THE firſt day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, " when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth " the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre. Then ſhe runneth " and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other diſciple whom " Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the " Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid " him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and " came to the ſepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other " diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre; and " he ſtooping down, and looking in, ſaw the linen clothes lying, " yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, " and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen clothes lie, and " the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen " clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itſelf. Then went in " alſo that other diſciple, which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he " ſaw and he believed; for as yet they knew not the ſcripture that " he muſt riſe again from the dead: Then the diſciples went away " again unto their own homes. But Mary ſtood without at the " ſepulchre weeping; and as ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, and " looked into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth two angels in white, ſitting, " the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body " of Jeſus had lain; and they ſay unto her, Woman, why weepeſt " thou? She ſaith unto them, Becauſe they have taken away my " Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when ſhe " had thus ſaid, ſhe turned herſelf back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, " and knew not that it was Jeſus. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, " why weepeſt thou? whom ſeekeſt thou? She ſuppoſing him to " be the Gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou haſt borne him " hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away. " Jeſus ſaid unto her, Mary! She turned herſelf, and ſaith unto " him, Rabboni? which is to ſay, Maſter. Jeſus ſaith unto her, " Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended unto my Father: But " go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and

" your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene " came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that " he had spoken these things unto her."

From this passage of the Gospel of St John, it is evident, 1st, That Mary Magdalene had not seen any vision of angels before she ran to Peter; and consequently, that she was not of the number of those women who went into the sepulchre, and were there told by an angel that Jesus wsa risen: for had she, before she went to Peter, seen any angels, she would certainly have added so extraordinary a circumstance to her account; and, had she been informed by an angel that Jesus was risen, she could not have persisted in lamenting at not being able to find the body; nor have inquired of him, whom she took to be the Gardener, where he had put it, that she might take it away. It is also farther observable, that, when after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and their departure from thence, she saw a vision of angels, she was standing without, at the sepulchre, weeping;——that stooping down, and looking (not going) into the sepulchre, she saw two angels in white, " sit- " ting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body " of Jesus had lain," who said no more to her than, " Woman, " why weepest thou?" to which she answered, " because they have " taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." From all which circumstances it appears, 2dly, that neither after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, was she with those women who went into the sepulcher, &c. that she had not heard any thing of Christ's being risen from the dead; and that therefore those women, who were told by an angel that he was risen, were not at the sepulchre when she returned thither with Peter and John. And indeed, from the whole tenor of the above-cited passage of St. John's gospel, throughout which no mention is made of any other woman besides Mary Magdalene, it is more than probable she was alone, when she saw the angels, and when Christ appeared to her immediately after. That she was alone when Christ appeared to her, is plainly implied in what St. Mark * says, who tells us expressly, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, had she been accompanied by the other Women, could not have been spoken of her with any propriety of speech. In the 3d place, it is plain, from the above relation, that the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper; for John and Peter going into the sepulchre saw no angels; but Mary, after their departure, looking in, saw two, one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

§ 2. LUKE, Chap. xxiv. 13.

" The same day two of them (the disciples) went to a village " called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore fur- " longs; and they talked together of all these things that had happened. " And it came to pass that, while they communed together, and " reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but

* Chap. xvi. ver. 9.

" their

" their eyes were holden, that they ſhould not know him. And he " ſaid unto them, What manner of communications are theſe, that " ye have one to another, as ye walk and are ſad? And one of them, " whoſe name was Cleopas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Art thou only " a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are " come to paſs there in theſe days? And he ſaid unto them, What " things? And they ſaid unto him, concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, " which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all " the people; and how the chief prieſts and our rulers deliver'd him " to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we truſted " that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and, beſides " all this, to-day is the third day ſince theſe things were done. Yea, " and certain women alſo of our company made us aſtoniſhed, which " were early at the ſepulchre; and when they found not his body, " they came, ſaying, that they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels, " which ſaid that he was alive; and certain of them which were " with us, went to the ſepulchre, and found it even ſo as the wo- " men had ſaid: but him they ſaw not."

The latter part of this paſſage, which contains an abridgement of a report made by ſome women to the apoſtles before theſe two diſciples had left Jeruſalem, ſuggeſts the following obſervations; 1ſt, The angels ſeen by theſe women at the ſepulchre told them, that Jeſus was alive, whence it follows, that this report was not made by Mary Magdalene; for the angels, which ſhe ſaw, ſaid no ſuch thing to her. 2dly, As there is no notice taken of any appearance of our Saviour to theſe women, it is alſo evident, that this report could not have been made by the other Mary and Salome, to whom, as they were going to tell the diſciples the meſſage of the angels which they had ſeen at the ſepulchre, Jeſus appeared, as I ſhall preſently ſhew from St. Matthew. 3dly, There were therefore ſeveral reports made at different times to the apoſtles, and by different women. At different times; for the two diſciples, who, before they left Jeruſalem, had heard the report now under conſideration, had not heard thoſe of Mary Magdalene, of the other Mary and Salome.—By different women; for it having been juſt now proved that this report could not belong to either of the laſt-mentioned women, it muſt have been made by ſome other; and no other being named by any of the Evangeliſts but Joanna, it came in all likelihood from her, and thoſe that attended her. 4thly, Some of the diſciples, upon hearing this report, " went to the ſepulchre, and " found it even ſo as the women had ſaid;" *i. e.* in the moſt obvious ſenſe of theſe words. They ſaw the body was gone, and they ſaw ſome angels. But I ſhall not inſiſt upon this interpretation, but only obſerve, that if Peter be ſuppoſed to have been one of thoſe diſciples who, upon this information of the women, went to the ſepulchre, this muſt have been the ſecond time of his going thither. That Peter went a ſecond time to the ſepulchre, I ſhall ſhew more at large, when I come to conſider the former part of this chapter of St. Luke.

Theſe ſeveral concluſions being admitted, I think it will be no difficult matter to defend the Evangeliſts againſt the imputation of

contradicting each other in the accounts they have given of what happened on the day of the resurrection. For unless authors, who relate different and independent parts of the same history, may, for that reason, be said to contradict each other, the Evangelists, I will be bold to say, stand as clear of that charge, at least in that part of their writings which we are now examining, as any of the most accurate historians, either ancient or modern; as I shall now endeavour to prove, by considering and comparing the several relations of this day's events, in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That written by St John I have already produced, so thar there will be no occasion for inserting it again in this place; those of St. Matthew and St. Mark I shall produce and examine together, for reasons which will be evident hearafter.

§ 3. MATTH. Chap. xxviii.

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first "day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to "see the sepulchre: and behold, there was a great earthquake; for "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled "back the stone from the door, and sat upon it: his countenance "was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of "him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the "angel answered and said unto the women: Fear not ye; for I "know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified: he is not here: for "he is risen, as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay: "and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the "dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall "ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly "from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring "his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold "Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they all came and held him "by the feet, and worshiped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be "not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and "there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, "some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief "priests all the things that were done. And when they were assem-"bled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large mo-"ney unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, "and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the go-"vernor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they "took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is "commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the "eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where "Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they wor-"shiped him: but some doubted."

MARK, Chap. xvi.

"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary "the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that "they

" they might come and anoint him; and very early in the morning,
" the firſt day of the week, they came into the ſepulchre at the riſing
" of the ſun. And they ſaid among themſelves, Who ſhall roll us
" away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre? And when they
" looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rolled away, for it was very
" great. And entering into the ſepulchre, they ſaw a young man
" ſitting on the right ſide, cloathed in a long white garment, and
" they were affrighted. And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted:
" ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is riſen,
" he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But
" go your way, tell his diſciples and Peter, that he goeth before you
" into Galilee: there ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you. And
" they went out quickly and fled from the ſepulchre; for they trem-
" bled and were amazed; neither ſaid they any thing to any man;
" for they were afraid. Now when Jeſus was riſen, early in the
" firſt day of the week, he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out
" of whom he had caſt ſeven devils. And ſhe went and told them
" that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they
" when they heard that he was alive, and had been ſeen of her, be-
" lieved not. After that, he appeared in another form unto two of
" them, as they walked and went into the country. And they went
" and told it unto the reſidue; neither believed they them. After-
" ward, he appeared unto the eleven, as they ſat at meat, and up-
" braided them with unbelief, and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they
" believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen."

I ſhall range the obſervations I intend to make upon the ſeveral particulars contained in theſe two paſſages under three heads. 1ſt, Of ſuch circumſtances as are related by one of theſe Evangeliſts, but omitted by the other. The 2d, of ſuch as they both agree in. And the 3d, of ſuch as ſeem to claſh and diſagree with each other. 1ſt, The ſeveral particulars of the earthquake, the deſcent of the Angel from heaven, his rolling away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre, and ſitting upon it, and the terror of the ſoldiers who guarded the ſepulchre, are related only by St. Matthew: as are likewiſe the appearances of our Saviour to the women, and to the eleven diſciples in Galilee, and the flight of the guards into the city, and all that paſſed between them and the chief prieſts upon that occaſion. On the other hand, St. Mark alone makes mention of the women's having bought ſpices, that they might come and anoint the body of our Saviour:—of Salome's being one of thoſe women; of their entering into the ſepulchre, and ſeeing there a young man ſitting on the right ſide, cloathed in a long white garment;—of the appearance of Chriſt to Mary Magdalene;—to the two diſciples who were going into the country;—and, laſtly, to the eleven as they ſat at meat. As not one of all theſe circumſtances can be proved to contradict or even diſagree with any particular, which either of theſe evangeliſts has thought fit to mention, no argument againſt the reality or credibility of them can be drawn from their not having been taken notice of by both; unleſs it can be made appear,

that a fact related by one hiſtorian, or one evidence, muſt therefor be falſe, becauſe it is paſſed over in ſilence by another. St. Matthew wrote his goſpel firſt, within a few years after the aſcenſion of our Lord; this goſpel St. Mark, who wrote his ſome few years after, is ſaid to have abridged; though this, I think, is ſaid with very little propriety. For how can that book be ſtyled an abridgement, which contains many particulars not mentioned in the original author? That St. Mark relates many circumſtances not taken notice of by St. Matthew, will eaſily appear to any one, who ſhall take the pains to compare them together; and of this, to go no farther, we have a plain inſtance in the two paſſages before us.

St. Matthew wrote his goſpel at the requeſt of the Jewiſh converts, who, having lived in that country where the ſcene of this great hiſtory was laid, were doubtleſs acquainted with many particulars, which, for that reaſon, it was not neceſſary to mention. This will account for the conciſeneſs and ſeeming defectiveneſs of his narrations in many places, as well as for his omitting ſome circumſtances which the other evangeliſts thought proper to relate. St. Mark compoſed his for Chriſtians of other nations, who, not having the ſame opportunities of being informed as their brethren of Judea, ſtood in need of ſome notes and comments, to enable them the better to underſtand the extract which St. Mark choſe to give them out of the goſpel written by St. Matthew. It was therefore neceſſary for St. Mark to inſert many particulars, which the purpoſe of St. Matthew in writing his goſpel did not lead him to take notice of. Allowing theſe evangeliſts to have had theſe two diſtinct views, let us ſee how they have purſued them in the paſſages now under conſideration.

That the diſciples of Jeſus came by night and ſtole away the body while the guards ſlept, was commonly reported among the Jews even ſo long after the aſcenſion of our Lord as when St. Matthew wrote his goſpel, as himſelf tells us *. To furniſh the Jewiſh converts with an anſwer to this abſurd ſtory, ſo induſtriouſly propagated among their unbelieving brethren, and ſupported by the authority of the chief prieſts and elders, this evangeliſt relates at large the hiſtory of the guarding the ſepulchre, &c. the earthquake, the deſcent of the angel, his rolling away the ſtone, and the fright of the ſoldiers at his appearance, who "ſhook and became as dead men." —And, indeed, by comparing this relation with the report given out by the ſoldiers, it will eaſily appear on which ſide the truth lay. For as there is nothing in the miraculous reſurrection of our Lord, ſo repugnant to reaſon and probability, as that the diſciples ſhould be able to roll away the ſtone which cloſed up the mouth of the ſepulchre, and carry off the body of Jeſus, unperceived by the ſoldiers, who were ſet there on purpoſe to guard againſt ſuch an attempt; ſo it is alſo evident, that the particulars of the ſoldiers report were founded upon the circumſtances of this hiſtory. In this report three things are aſſerted, viz. that the diſciples ſtole the body,—that

* Chap. xxviii. ver. 15.

they

they ſtole it in the night,—and that they ſtole it while the guards were aſleep. That Jeſus came out of the ſepulchre before the riſing of the ſun, St. Matthew informs us, who ſays, that the earthquake &c. happened at the time when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary ſet out in order to take a view of the ſepulchre, which was juſt as the day began to break. This fact was undoubtedly too notorious for the chief prieſts to venture at falſifying it, and was beſides favourable to the two other articles; this therefore they admitted; and taking the hint from what the ſoldiers told them of their having been caſt into a ſwoon or trance (becoming like dead men) at the appearance of the angel, and conſequently not having ſeen our Saviour come out of the ſepulchre, they forged the remaining parts of this ſtory, that his diſciples came and ſtole him away while they ſlept. They took the hint, I ſay, of framing theſe two laſt-mentioned articles from that circumſtance related by St. Matthew, of the keepers ſhaking and becoming like dead men upon the ſight of the angel; for throughout this whole hiſtory there was no other beſides this upon which they could prevaricate and diſpute. The ſtone was rolled away from the ſepulchre, and the body was gone; this the chief prieſts were to account for, without allowing that Jeſus was riſen from the dead. The diſciples, they ſaid, ſtole it away. What! while the guards were there: yes, the guards were aſleep. With this anſwer they knew full well many would be ſatisfied, without inquiring any farther into the matter: but they could not expect that every body would be ſo contented; eſpecially as they had reaſon to apprehend, that although the ſoldiers, who had taken their money, might be faithful to them, keep their ſecret, and atteſt the ſtory they had framed for them, yet the truth might come out, by means of thoſe whom they had not bribed; for St Matthew ſays *, that ſome of the watch went into the city, "and ſhewed unto the "chief prieſts all the things that were done." Some therefore remained behind, who probably had no ſhare of the money which the chief prieſts gave to the ſoldiers; or, if they had, in all likelihood it came too late; they had already divulged the truth, as well from an eagerneſs, which all men naturally have, to tell a wonderful ſtory, as from a deſire of juſtifying themſelves for having quitted their poſt. The chief prieſts therefore were to guard againſt this event alſo; in order to which, nothing could be more effectual, than to counterwork the evidence of one part of the ſoldiers, by putting into the mouths of others of them a ſtory, which, without directly contradicting the facts, might yet tend to overthrow the only concluſion which the diſciples of Jeſus would endeavour to draw from them, and which they were ſo much concerned to diſcredit, viz. That Jeſus was riſen from the dead. For if the diſciples and patizans of Jeſus, informed by one part of the ſoldiers of the ſeveral circumſtances related in St. Matthew, ſhould urge theſe miraculous events as ſo many proofs of the reſurrection of their maſter, the unbeliev-

* Chap. xxviii. ver. 11.

ing Jews were, by the teſtimony of thoſe ſuborned witneſſes, inſtructed to anſwer, that the earthquake and the angel were illuſions of dreams,——that the ſoldiers had honeſtly confeſs'd they were aſleep, though ſome of them, to ſkreen themſelves from the ſhame or puniſhment ſuch a breach of diſcipline deſerved, pretended they were frightened into a ſwoon or trance by an extraordinary appearance, which they never ſaw, or ſaw only in a dream;——that while they ſlept, the diſciples came and ſtole the body; for none of the ſoldiers, not even thoſe who ſaw the moſt, pretend to have ſeen Jeſus come out of the ſepulchre:——they are all equally ignorant by what means the body was removed;——when they awaked, it was miſſing;——and it was much more likely that the diſciples ſhould have ſtolen it away, than that an impoſtor ſhould riſe from the dead. I ſhall not go about to confute this ſtory; to unprejudiced and thinking people it carries its own confutation with it: But I muſt obſerve, that it is founded entirely upon the circumſtance of the ſoldiers not having ſeen Jeſus come out of the ſepulchre, a circumſtance that even thoſe, who told the real truth, could not contradict, though they accounted for it in a different manner, by ſaying they were frightened into a ſwoon or trance at the ſight of a terrible apparition, that came and rolled away the ſtone, and ſat upon it. But this fact the chief prieſts thought it not prudent to allow, as favouring too much the opinion of Chriſt's being riſen from the dead; neither did they think proper to reject it entirely, becauſe they intended to turn it to their own advantage; and therefore, denying every thing that was miraculous, they conſtrued this ſwoon or trance into a ſleep, and with a large ſum of money and promiſes of impunity hired the ſoldiers to confeſs a crime, and, by taking ſhame to themſelves, to cover them from confuſion. And ſo far, it muſt be acknowledged, they gained their point; for, until ſome proofs of the reſurrection of Jeſus ſhould be produced, of which at that time they had heard nothing more, this ſtory would undoubtedly have ſerved to puzzle the cauſe, and hold people in ſuſpenſe. Argument and reaſon indeed were wholly on the other ſide; but prejudice and authority were on theirs; and they were not ignorant to which the bulk of mankind were moſt diſpoſed to ſubmit.

But as no other than preſumptive arguments in favour of the reſurrection could be drawn from what happened to the ſoldiers at the ſepulchre, even though the chief prieſts had permitted them to tell the truth; St. Matthew, in his narration, proceeds to ſecond and confirm thoſe arguments by poſitive evidence, producing witneſſes who had ſeen and converſed with Jeſus Chriſt, after he was riſen from the dead: of theſe, as may be gathered from the other goſpels, the number was very conſiderable; and very numerous were the inſtances of Chriſt's appearing after his reſurrection: yet from the latter has St. Matthew ſelected only two, upon each of which I beg leave to make a few remarks. The firſt appearance of Chriſt is to the women, which happened as they went to tell the diſciples the meſſage of the angel that had appeared to them in the ſepulchre. I have already

ready proved, in my obſervations upon St. John, that Mary Magdalene was not one of thoſe women; and yet the words of St. Matthew, by the common rule of conſtruction, ſeem to import the contrary. For, in the firſt place, the paragraph "(and the angel anſwered and ſaid to the women)" is, in our tranſlation, connected with the preceding by the copulative "and." 2dly, As in the foregoing part of this chapter no mention is made of any other women than Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and no hint given of any other angel than that deſcribed as deſcending from heaven, &c. the words in this paragraph "(the angel and the women)" muſt be taken to relate to them. To which I anſwer, 1ſt, That this paragraph is not to be ſo connected with the preceding, as if nothing had intervened; ſince we ſhall find upon a cloſer examination of it, and comparing it with its parallel in St. Mark, that between the keepers becoming like dead men, and the angels ſpeaking to the women, Salome had joined the two Marys in their way to the ſepulchre; that before they arrived there the keepers were fled, and the angel was removed from off the ſtone, and was ſeated within the ſepulchre: for which reaſon the particle δὲ, inſtead of being rendered by the copulative *and*, ſhould rather be expreſſed by the disjunctive *but*, or *now*, as denoting an interruption in the narration, and the beginning of a new paragraph. 2dly, I allow the angel here ſpoken of to be the ſame with that mentioned in the foregoing verſes, and the other Mary to be one of thoſe women to whom this angel in the ſepulchre, and afterwards Chriſt himſelf appeared, and therefore admit the words, "the angel and the women" in this verſe relate to them. But this will not remove the difficulty; and it will be ſaid, that either Mary Magdalene was with the other Mary in the ſepulchre, or there is an inaccuracy in the expreſſion; for the words, "women," and "fear not ye," being plural, imply there were more than one. I grant it, and St. Mark informs us that Salome was there. —But then, inſtead of one inaccuracy to be charged upon St. Matthew, here are two: Mary Magdalene, who was not preſent when the other Mary ſaw the angel, is, by the natural conſtruction of his words, ſaid to be there; and Salome, who was preſent, he takes no notice of at all.—I allow it, and let thoſe who are given to object make the moſt of it: but let it at the ſame time be remembered, that the greateſt part of the evangelical writers were illiterate men, not ſkilled in the rules of eloquence, or grammatical niceties, againſt the laws of which it is eaſy to point out many faults in the writings of moſt of them. The other paſſage, I purpoſed to make ſome remarks upon, affords another inſtance of the ſame kind; it is as follows: "Then the eleven diſciples went away into Galilee, into a "mountain, where Jeſus had appointed them, and when they ſaw "him, they worſhiped him; but ſome doubted." Here the words, "ſome doubted," by the ſtrict rules of grammar, muſt be underſtood of ſome of the eleven diſciples, who immediately before are ſaid, when they ſaw Jeſus, to have worſhiped him; which ſurely is not very conſiſtent with their doubting: neither is it very probable that a writer,

writer, however illiterate, ſhould mean to contradict himſelf in the compaſs of three words. Another interpretation therefore, though it be not ſo ſtrictly agreeable to the grammer rules, is to be ſought after, ſince it is a leſs crime to offend againſt grammar than againſt common ſenſe. "Some doubted," muſt mean ſome, beſides the eleven who were preſent upon that occaſion, doubted. And indeed had Sr. Matthew, in the former part of this narration, taken notice that others beſides the eleven were there, there would have been no difficulty in underſtanding, even according to the ſtricteſt laws of the ſyntax, to whom the "ſome doubted" did belong; οἱ δὲ, and οἱ δὲ ſet in oppoſition to each other, and ſignifying *ſome* and *others*, *theſe* and *thoſe*, are frequently to be met with in Greek authors of the greateſt authority; and no reaſon can be given, why, according to this manner of ſpeaking, the οἱ δὲ ἕνδεκα μαθηταὶ προσεκυνήσαν αὐτῷ—οἱ δὲ ἐδίσασαν, ſhould not be interpreted now or then, the eleven diſciples—worſhiped him, but others doubted; but that ſome words to which the ſecond οἱδὲ (others) refer, are wanting.

But theſe defects, how grievous ſoever they may ſeem to grammarians, or cavillers, ſtill more ſcrupulous and more punctilious than grammarians themſelves, will by no means impeach the veracity of this evangeliſt in the opinion of thoſe who, in making a judgment of his writings, are willing to take into the account the purpoſe he had in compoſing his goſpel. He wrote, as I obſerved before, at the requeſt of the Jewiſh converts; who, as St. Chryſoſtom informs us *, came to him and beſought him to leave, in writing, what they heard from him by word of mouth. His view in writing the goſpel therefore to the Jews, was to repeat what he had before preached to them: in doing of which, it was not at all incumbent upon him to relate every minute circumſtance, which he could not but know they were well acquainted with, and which the mention of the principal fact could not fail to recall to their memories. Thus in the two paſſages above cited (to confine myſelf to them) it was not neceſſary for him, writing to the Jews, as it was for St, Mark who wrote for the Egyptian converts †, to explain the buſineſs that carried Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the ſepulchre. It was doubtleſs known among the Jews that they had bought ſpices, and went to the ſepulchre in order to embalm the body of Jeſus. Neither was it worth while, for the ſake of a little grammatical exactneſs, to interrupt the courſe of his narration, to acquaint them that Salome joined the two Marys as they were going to the ſepulchre, and went with them thither; and that Mary Magdalene, upon ſeeing the ſtone rolled away, ran immediately to inform Peter and John of it; eſpecially as he did not think proper to take notice of Chriſt's having appeared to her: and he ſeems to me to have mentioned Chriſt's appearing to the other women, only becauſe it was connected with the principal fact, the ſtory

* Ὑπομν. περὶ Ματθ.

† Ibid.

of

of his appearing in Galilee to the eleven disciples and others. The disciples going to meet their master on a mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed them, must needs have made a great noise among the Jews; especially as it did not fall out till above a week at least after the resurrection; during which time he had appeared thrice to his disciples *, not including his appearance to Peter, to the two disciples, and the women. And as above twenty people were witnesses to one or other of these appearances, the fame of them was in all probability diffused not only through Jerusalem, but throughout all Judea. It is no wonder, therefore, that upon this solemn occasion, which had been notified so long before, not only by an angel at the sepulchre, and by Christ himself on the day of his resurrection, but foretold by him even before his death; it is no wonder, I say, that upon so solemn an occasion a great multitude, besides the eleven, should be got together. St. Paul † mentions an appearance of Christ to above five hundred brethren at once, which cannot, with so good reason, be understood of any other but this in Galilee. And though out of so large an assembly some doubted, as St. Matthew says, yet that very exception implies, that the greatest number believed; and even those who doubted must have agreed in some common pointr with those who believed. They, as well as the eleven, saw Jesus, but, not having had the same sensible evidences of the reality of his body, doubted whether it was himself or his apparition which they beheld; while the latter, who needed no farther conviction, when they saw him, fell down and worshiped. Here then was a fact, which could not in all its circumstances but be very notorious to the Jews, and was therefore highly proper to be mentioned by St. Matthew. Here was a cloud of witnesses ‡, the greatest part of whom were alive when St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians §, and therefore were certainly living when St. Matthew composed his gospel; and many of them probably were of the number of those converts, for whom he wrote. Upon any of these suppositions, and especially the last, it is easy to account for the concise manner in which he has related this important event. It either was, or might easily be, known with all its circumstances by those to whom he addressed his Gospel. The little attendant circumstances, therefore, it were as needless for him to mention, as it was proper to take notice of the event itself. The Gospel of Christ and the faith of Christians are both vain, if Christ be not risen from the dead. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the apostles and preachers of the gospel to prove the resurrection; this they did as well by their own testimony, as by that of others, who had seen Jesus after he was risen. Thus ‖ St. Paul relates several appearances of Christ to Cephas and others, and closes all with his own evidence; adding, "and last of all he was seen of me also." The

* See John, chap. xxi. ver. 14. † 1 Cor. chap. xv. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 6.
§ St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians was written A. D. 57. See Mr. Locke, ad locum. The Gospel according to St. Matthew, about the year 53.
‖ 1 Cor. xv. 5—8.

Evan-

Evangeliſts in like manner produce many inſtances of the like nature. St. Matthew ſpeaks of two, St. Mark of three, St. Luke of as many, and St. John of four; each of them ſelecting ſuch as beſt ſuited with the purpoſe had in view when they wrote their goſpels. It is evident at leaſt that St. Matthew did ſo. For in what better manner could he prove to the Jews the reſurrection of Chriſt, than by referring them to the teſtimony of ſome hundreds of their own countrymen, who had all ſeen him after his death, and were ſo well convinced of the reality of his reſurrection, that they believed and embraced his doctrine? This ſurely was ſufficient to convince thoſe who required a number of witneſſes; and was, among the Jews at leaſt, the beſt anſwer to thoſe who, on the credit of a few Roman ſoldiers, pretended that the diſciples had ſtolen the body. Upon this fact therefore he ſeems to reſt his cauſe, and with it cloſes his goſpel, adding only the commiſſion given by Chriſt to the apoſtles, and conſequently to himſelf as one of them, "to go and teach "all nations," and his promiſe of "being with them always even "unto the end of the world."

Thus, upon the ſuppoſition that St. Matthew wrote his goſpel for the Jewiſh converts, which St Chryſoſtom poſitively aſſerts, I have endeavoured to account for ſome defects and omiſſions obſervable in his writings, as alſo for his having given us the hiſtory of the guarding the ſepulchre, &c. and of Chriſt's appearing to the eleven diſciples in Galilee, of which the other evangeliſts make no mention. I ſhall now make a few remarks upon the particulars related by St Mark, and of which no notice is taken by St. Matthew; but, that I may not wander too far from my purpoſe, I ſhall confine them to ſuch only as, belonging to the facts related by the latter, and having been mentioned only by the former, have induced ſome people to charge theſe two evangeliſts with contradicting one another. The circumſtances then that I now intend to conſider are, 1ſt, That of the women's "having bought ſpices, that they might come "and anoint the body of Jeſus;" 2dly, that of Salome's being one of thoſe women; and, 3dly, that of their "entering into the ſe-"pulchre, and ſeeing a young man ſitting on the right ſide cloathed "in a long white garment, and their being affrighted." I have already obſerved, that St. Mark wrote his goſpel for the uſe of the Egyptian Chriſtians; ſome ſay the Roman, but whether Roman or Egyptian is not material to the preſent queſtion. It is certain they were Gentiles, and ſtrangers to the Jewiſh cuſtoms and religion, as may be inferred from ſeveral little explanatory notes dropt up and down in his goſpel. In order, therefore, to give theſe ſtrangers a perfect intelligence of the fact he thought proper to relate, it was neceſſary for him to begin his account with that circumſtance of the women's having bought ſpices, to anoint the body of Jeſus, that they might underſtand what buſineſs carried them ſo early to the ſepulchre, and ſee, by the preparations made by thoſe women for the embalming the body of Jeſus, and the little credit given by the Apoſtles to the reports of thoſe who had ſeen our Lord on the day

of

of the reſurrection (which he mentions afterwards), that his riſing from the dead was an event not in the leaſt expected by any of them, and not believed by the Apoſtles even after ſuch evidence as Jeſus upbraided them for not aſſenting to; from all which it was natural for them to conclude, that this fundamental article of their faith was neither received nor preached but upon the fulleſt conviction of its truth.—But of this laſt point I ſhall ſpeak more largely hereafter. For his mentioning Salome (which was the ſecond thing propoſed to be conſidered) no other reaſon can be given, and no better I believe will be required, than that ſhe was there: and as to the third circumſtance, viz. that of their "entering into the ſepulchre, "and ſeeing an Angel there ſitting on the right ſide," &c. I ſhall ſhew under the ſecond head, which I come now to conſider, that though St. Mark has been more particular in his relation of it, yet the principal points are implied in the account given by St. Matthew,

§ 4. THE 2d head contains the circumſtances in which theſe two Evangeliſts agree: and they are theſe: 1ſt, The women's going to the ſepulchre early in the morning on the firſt day of the week: 2dly, Their being told by an angel that Chriſt was riſen, &c. I have nothing to add to the remarks I have already made upon the firſt; but upon the ſecond I muſt obſerve, that the ſeveral particulars put into the mouth of this angel at the ſepulchre by theſe two Evangeliſts are perciſely the ſame, except the addition of Peter's name, inſerted by St. Mark, doubtleſs for ſome particular reaſon, which it is no wonder we ſhould not be able to diſcover at this great diſtance of time. This ſingle variation will not, I preſume, be thought ſufficient to overturn the concluſion I would draw from the exact agreement of all the other particulars, that the fact related by theſe two ſacred writers is the ſame; eſpecially if it be conſidered, that the circumſtance of the angel's being within the ſepulchre, expreſsly mentioned by St. Mark, is ſo far from being contradicted by St. Matthew, as ſome have imagined, that it is plainly implied by theſe words, "He is not here,——Come" (δεῦτε, which might more properly be tranſlated "come hither") "ſee the place, where the Lord lay:" as is alſo that other circumſtance of the womens entering into the ſepulchre, by the Greek term ἐξελθοῦσαι, which ſhould have been rendered "they went out," inſtead of, "they departed," as it is in the parallel paſſage in St. Mark. To which let me farther add, that the deſcription of the angel's cloathing, which was a long white garment, according to St. Mark, correſponds with the only particular relating to it taken notice of by St. Matthew, which was, its whiteneſs: "His raiment was white as ſnow." In the latter, indeed, this angel is alſo painted with "a countenance like lightning," and "the "keepers" are ſaid to have trembled, &c. for fear of him. The purpoſe of this angel's deſcending from heaven ſeems to have been not only to roll away the ſtone from the mouth of the ſepulchre, that the women who were on their way thither might have free entrance into it, but alſo to fright away the ſoldiers, who were ſet to guard it, and who, had they continued there, would certainly not have

Permitted the disciples of Jesus to have made the necessary inquiries for their conviction, could it be supposed that either they, or the women, would have attempted to enter into the sepulchre while it was surrounded by a Roman guard. For this end it is not unreasonable to suppose he might not only raise an earthquake, but assume a countenance of terror, and after it was accomplished put on the milder appearance of a young man, in which form the women, as St. Mark says, saw him "sitting within the sepulchre, on "the right side." This supposition, I say, is neither unreasonable nor presumptuous. For although to argue from the event to the design or intention may, in judging of human affairs, be deceitful or precarious; yet in the actions of God, the supreme disposer of all events, it is most certain and conclusive. Thus in the present case, the sudden appearance of an angel from heaven, attended by an earthquake *, his removing by his single strength a stone, which (according to Beza's copy of St. Luke's gospel) twenty men could hardly roll, his taking his station upon it, and from thence, with a countenance like lightning, blazing and flashing amid the darkness of the night, were circumstances so full of terror and amazement, that they could not fail of producing, even in the hearts of Roman soldiers, the consternation mentioned by the Evangelists, and driving them from a post, which a divinity (for so, according to their way of thinking and speaking, they must have styled the angel) had now taken possession of. A cause so fitted to produce such an effect is an argument of its being intended to produce it; and the intention being answered by the event, is a sufficient reason for varying afterwards the manner of proceeding. Accordingly the angel, after he had removed the stone, and frighted away the keepers from the sepulchre, quitted his station on the outside, put off his terrors, and, entering into the sepulchre, sat there in the form of a young man, to acquaint the women that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought in the grave, was risen from the dead. That the angel was not seen by the women sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, is evident not only from the silence of all the Evangelists, with regard to such an appearance, but also from what has already been observed concerning Mary Magdalene, who, though she saw the stone rolled away from the Sepulchre, yet saw no angel, as I shewed above. Besides, had the angel remained sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, with all his terrors about him, he would in all probability, by frightening away the women and disciples, as well as the soldiers, have prevented those visits to the sepulchre, which he came on purpose to facilitate. It was necessary, therefore, either that he should not appear at all to the women, or that he should appear within the sepulchre, and in a form which, although more than human, might however not be so terible as to deprive them of their senses, and render them incapable of hearing, certainly of remembering, that message which he commanded them to deliver to the disciples. From all which considerations it may fairly be concluded,

* See Whiston on the Resurrection, &c. according to Beza, &c.

that

that the appearance of the angel without the ſepulchre, mentioned by St. Matthew, was to the keepers only; and that when he was ſeen by the women, he was within the ſepulchre, as St. Mark expreſsly ſays, and as the words above-cited from St. Matthew ſtrongly imply; ſo that theſe two Evangeliſts agree in relating not only the words ſpoken by the angel, but the principal, and as it were characteriſtical circumſtances of the fact, which from this agreement I would infer to be one and the ſame. The like agreement is alſo to be found in their account of the terror of the women upon ſeeing the angel, their ſpeedy flight from the ſepulchre, and the diſorder and confuſion which ſo extraordinary an event occaſioned in their minds; a confuſed and troubled mixture of terror, aſtoniſhment, and joy; which, according to St. Mark, was ſo great as to prevent their telling what had happened to thoſe they met upon the way: ſo muſt we underſtand "neither ſaid they any thing to any man." For it is not to be imagined that they never opened their lips about it. Their ſilence doubtleſs ended with the cauſe of it, viz. their terror and amazement, and theſe in all probability vaniſhed upon their ſeeing Chriſt himſelf, who, as St. Matthew hath informed us, met them, as they were going to tell the diſciples the meſſage of the angel, accoſted them with an "All hail," and bade them diſmiſs their fears. But of this more hereafter.

§ 5. I come now, under the 3d head, to conſider thoſe particulars in which theſe two Evangeliſts are thought to claſh and diſagree with each other. But ſo many of thoſe have been already examined, and, as I hope, reconciled, under the two preceding diviſions, that there remains to be diſcuſſed in this but one ſingle point, ariſing from the ſeeming different accounts of the time when the women came to the Sepulchre. St. Matthew ſays, "that Mary Magdalene and the other "Mary came to ſee the Sepulchre, as it began to dawn;" St. Mark, "They came unto the Sepulchre at the riſing of the Sun." To which I muſt add St. John, who, ſpeaking of the ſame perſons, and the ſame fact, ſays, "they came when it was yet dark. The σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης of the latter, and the τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ of St. Matthew, that ſignifying it being yet dark, and this, the day beginning to dawn, will, I believe, without any difficulty be allowed to denote the ſame point of time, *viz.* the ending of the night, and the beginning of the day; the only queſtion therefore is, how this can be reconciled with the time mentioned in St. Mark, namely, "the riſing of the Sun." But this queſtion, how perplexing ſoever it may appear at firſt ſight, is eaſily reſolved, only by ſuppoſing that St. Matthew, and with him St. John, ſpeaks of the women's ſetting out, and St. Mark of their arrival at the Sepulchre. And indeed the order of St. Matthew's narration repuires that his words ſhould be underſtood to ſignify the time of their ſetting out; otherwiſe, all that is related of the earthquake, the deſcent of the Angel, *&c.* muſt be thrown into parentheſis, which very much diſturbs the ſeries of the ſtory, and introduces much greater harſhneſs into the conſtruction, than any avoided by it. Nay, for my own part, I confeſs I can ſee no harſhneſs in the interpreta-

tion now contended for. The Greek word ἦλθε, in St. Matthew, might as well have been tranſlated *went* as *come*, the verb ἔρχομαι ſignifying both *to go* and *to come*, and conſequently being capable of either ſenſe, according as the context ſhall require. That in St. Matthew, as I ſaid before, requires us to take the word ἦλθε in the former, for the ſake of order, and for another reaſon, which I ſhall now explain. The principal fact, upon the account of which the whole ſtory of the women's going to the ſepulchre ſeems to have been related, is the reſurrection of Chriſt; and this fact is abſolutely without a date, if the words of St. Matthew are to be underſtood to denote the time of the women's arrival at the ſepulchre. When I ſay without a date, I mean that it does not appear, from any thing in St. Matthew or the other Evangeliſts, what hour of that night this great event happened. All the information they give us is, that when the women came to the ſepulchre, they were told by Angels he was riſen; but, on the contrary, by underſtanding St. Matthew to ſpeak of the time of Mary Magdalene's ſetting out to take a view of the ſepulchre, we have the date of the reſurrection ſettled, and know preciſely that Chriſt roſe from the dead between the dawning of the day and the ſun-riſing. And can any ſubſtantial reaſon be aſſigned, why St. Matthew, having thought fit to enter into ſo circumſtantial an account of the reſurrection, ſhould omit the date of ſo important a fact? or that, not intending to mark it, by mentioning the time of the women's going to the Sepulchre, he ſhould place that fact before another, which in order of time was prior to it? All theſe conſiderations therefore are, in my opinion, powerful arguments for underſtanding this paſſage of St. Matthew in the ſenſe above expreſſed. About St. Mark's meaning, there is no diſpute. He certainly intended to expreſs the time of the women's arrival at the ſepulchre; his words cannot be taken in any other ſenſe. Thoſe of St. John are limited to the ſame interpretation with thoſe of St Matthew, it having been allowed before that they both ſpeak of the ſame point of time.

Before I quit the examination of theſe Evangeliſts, I beg leave to add a few remarks, on occaſion of a word made uſe of in this place both by Mark and John, the explaining of which will ſet in a proper light ſome paſſages, that have not hitherto been brought ſufficiently in view. The word I mean is πρωΐ, which, having by our tranſlators been rendered by the Engliſh word *early*, hath been limited to that ſenſe only; and yet it has a farther ſignification, and imports not* *maturè* only, but, *præmaturè*, *ante conſtitutum tempus*; not only "early," but "over-early, before the appointed time;" and in this ſenſe, I am perſuaded, it was here uſed by the Evangeliſts. For had they intended to denote only the time of the women's ſetting out, and arriving at the ſepulchre, the deſcriptive phraſes "while it was yet dark," and "at the riſing of the ſun," would have been ſufficient, and the more general word "early" abſolutely redundant; whereas in the other ſenſe it is very ſignificant, and greatly tends to illuſtrate and confirm what

* Vid. Scapulæ Lexicon.

I hope

I hope more fully to make appear by comparing the ſeveral parts of this hiſtory together, that the women came at different times to the ſepulchre, and not all at once, as has been imagined. The buſineſs that carried them all thither, was to pay their laſt reſpects to their deceaſed maſter, by embalming his body, for which end they had bought and prepared unguents and ſpices, but were obliged to defer their pious work by the coming on of the Sabbath, "upon which "day they reſted," ſays St. Luke, "according to the commandment." On the eve of the Sabbath, therefore, when they parted, and each retired to their ſeveral habitations, it is moſt natural to ſuppoſe that they agreed to meet upon a certain hour at the ſepulchre; and as the errand upon which they were employed required day-light, the hour agreed on in all probability was ſoon after the riſing of the ſun; their apprehenſion of the Jews, as well as their zeal to their maſter, prompting them to take the earlieſt opportunity. But Mary Magdalene, it ſeems, whether from a natural eagerneſs of temper, or a more ardent affection for her Lord, to whom ſhe had the greateſt obligations, or from a higher cauſe, ſet out together with the other Mary, juſt as the day began to break, in order to take a view of the ſepulchre; and having either called upon Salome, or joined her in the way, came thither together with her, πρωΐ, 'early,' before the time agreed on. This, in my opinion, is a very natural account of the whole matter, and points out the importance of theſe remarkable expreſſions, "went to ſee the ſepulchre," in St. Matthew, and "who "ſhall roll away the ſtone for us?" in St. Mark. For, 1ſt, the reaſon of theſe two Marys ſetting out ſo early is here aſſigned: 'They 'went to take a view of the ſepulchre,' *i. e.* in general, to ſee if all things were in the ſame condition in which they had left them two days before, that, if in that interval any thing extraordinary had happened, they might report it to their companions, and in conjunction with them take their meaſures accordingly. Hence it is alſo evident, in the ſecond place, why they were ſo few in number; they came to view the ſepulchre, and came before the time appointed for their meeting. 2dly, As upon the preſent ſuppoſition there were but three women who came firſt to the ſepulchre, their deſign in coming ſo early could be no other than that expreſſed by St. Matthew; for they knew that they themſelve were not able to roll away the ſtone, which two of them at leaſt (the two Marys) had ſeen placed there by Joſeph of Arimathea*, and which they knew could not be removed without a great number of hands. Accordingly, "as they drew near "they ſaid among themſelves, who ſhall roll away the ſtone for us "from the door of the ſepulchre?" Theſe words intimate, that one of their chief views in coming to ſee the ſepulchre was to ſurvey this ſtone, which cloſed up the entrance into it, and to conſider whether they, and the other women who were to meet them there, were by themſelves able to remove it; or whether they muſt have recourſe to the aſſiſtance of others. For, "Who ſhall roll away the ſtone for

* Mark xv. 47.

"us?" implies a ſenſe of their own inability, and of the neceſſity of calling in others; after which the only thing to be conſidered was whom and how many: this therefore was the point under deliberation when they approached the ſepulchre. 2dly, It is alſo plain, from theſe words, that they did not expect to find any body there, and conſequently that they knew nothing of the guard which the High-prieſt had ſet to watch the ſepulchre; of which had they received any intelligence, they would hardly have ventured to come at all, or would not have deliberated about rolling away the ſtone, as the only or greateſt difficulty.

§ 6. St. Luke, Chap. xxiv.

"NOW upon the firſt day of the week, very early in the morn-
"ing, they came unto the ſepulchre, bringing the ſpices which they
"had prepared, and certain others with them: And they found the
"ſtone rolled away from the ſepulchre. And they entered in, and
"found not the body of the Lord Jeſus. And it came to paſs as they
"were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men ſtood by them
"in ſhining garments; and as they were afraid, and bowed down
"their faces to the earth, they ſaid unto them, Why ſeek ye the liv-
"ing among the dead? he is not here, but is riſen. Remember
"how he ſpake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, ſaying, The
"Son of man muſt be delivered into the hands of ſinful men, and be
"crucified, and the third day riſe again. And they remembered his
"words, and returned from the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things
"unto the eleven, and to all the reſt. It was Mary Magdalene, and
"Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that
"were with them, which told theſe things unto the Apoſtles. And
"their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them
"not. Then aroſe Peter, and ran unto the ſepulchre, and ſtooping
"down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themſelves, and departed,
"wondering in himſelf at that which was come to paſs."

In this relation of St. Luke's are many particulars that differ greatly from thoſe mentioned by the other Evangeliſts. For 1ſt, The women entering into the ſepulchre ſee neither angel nor angels: And 2dly, Not finding the body of the Lord Jeſus, they fall into great perplexity. 3dly, In the midſt of this perplexity, "there ſtood by "them two men in ſhining garments;" Who, 4thly, ſay to them words very different from thoſe ſpoken by the angel in St. Matthew and St Mark. 5thly, When thoſe women return from the ſepulchre, and tell all theſe things unto the eleven and all the reſt, St. Peter is made to be preſent, and upon their report to riſe immediately and run to the ſepulchre, &c. Theſe marks of difference, one would imagine, were ſufficient to keep any one from confounding the ſtories above-cited of Joanna and St. Peter with thoſe concerning the Marys, and that diſciple related in the other goſpels; eſpecially as they have been obſerved and acknowledged as well by the Chriſtian as the infidel; the latter of whom hath produced them to ſupport the charge of inconſiſtency and contradiction, which he hath endeavoured to fix upon the ſacred writers; while the former, ſeduced and dazzled by ſome

ſome few points of reſemblance, hath agreed with him in allowing theſe different facts to be the ſame; but, denying his concluſion, hath laboured to reconcile the inconſiſtencies by rules and methods of interpretation, which, as they are ſtrained and unnatural, tend only to diſcover the greatneſs of his embarraſſment. Whereas the true way, in my opinion, of anſwering this charge, is to ſhew that it is founded upon a miſtake, by ſhewing that the evangeliſts relate different, but not inconſiſtent facts; and that, inſtead of claſhing and diſagreeing, they mutually confirm, illuſtrate, and ſupport each other's evidence. This therefore I ſhall now endeavour to do, by making a few remarks upon the ſeveral articles above-mentioned. I ſhall begin with that relating to St Peter, becauſe the ſettling of that will ſettle many other points. "Then aroſe Peter, "and ran unto the ſepulchre, and ſtooping down he beheld the linen "clothes laid by themſelves, and departed, wondering in himſelf at "that which was come to paſs." This fact has always been taken to be the ſame with that related by St. John, from which however it differs, among other things, in this very material circumſtance, viz. That whereas St. John expreſſly ſays, "that Peter went into the ſe-"pulchre, while he [John], who got thither firſt, contented himſelf "with barely ſtooping down, and looking into it," St. Luke, in the paſſage before us, tells us, "that Peter ſtooping down, and looking "in, beheld the linen clothes by themſelves, and departed." The word παρακύψας (ſtooping down and looking in), uſed by both evangeliſts, and in the latter applied only to St. Peter, in the former only to St. John, is in his Goſpel plainly diſtinguiſhed from the word εἰσῆλθεν (entered in), and ſet in direct oppoſition to it: and that not by the force of etymology and conſtruction only, but by ſome particulars reſulting from the actions ſignified by thoſe two words, which prove them to be diſtinct and different from each other. 'He who 'went into the ſepulchre ſaw more than he, who, ſtaying without, 'only ſtooped down and looked in.' Thus Peter and John, when they entered into the ſepulchre, ſaw not only the linen clothes lie, but the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itſelf: but when they only ſtooped down and looked in, they could ſee only the linen clothes, as is evident from the words of St. John. The whole paſſage runs thus: 'Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the 'ſepulchre, and the other diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt 'to the ſepulchre, and he ſtooping down, and looking in, ſaw the 'linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter 'following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen 'clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with 'the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itſelf. Then 'went in alſo that other diſciple, and ſaw,' &c. Now theſe two actions being by theſe marks as clearly diſtinguiſhed from each other in St. John, as the different places where they were performed can be by the terms entrance and inſide of the ſepulchre, and as ſo diſtinguiſhed having been ſeparately performed by that Apoſtle, they muſt alſo

neceſſarily be taken for ſeparate and diſtinct actions, when related of St. Peter. And if it be reaſonable to conclude, from St. John's account, that Peter, when he came with him to the ſepulchre, did not ſtop at the entrance, ſtoop down and look in, but that he entered into it; it is no leſs reaſonable to conclude, from St. Luke's narration, that, when he came at the time mentioned by him, he did not enter in, but ſtooping down beheld the linen clothes and departed, eſpecially if the force of the Greek word μόνα be conſidered, and the whole paſſage rendered, as it ought to have been, beheld the linen clothes only lying, τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα μόνα. From all which it evidently follows, that the fact here related of St. Peter, and that related of him by St. John, are ſeparate and diſtinct facts, and not one and the ſame, as has been imagined. And as the facts were different, ſo did they take their riſe from two different occaſions, or in other words, as it is evident from all that has been juſt now ſaid, that Peter went twice to the ſepulchre, ſo there are two diſtinct reaſons for his ſo doing aſſigned in the goſpels of Luke and John, *viz.* the report of Mary Magdalene, and that of Joanna and the other women. By the former having been told that the body of Jeſus was taken out of the ſepulchre, he ran in great haſte to examine into the truth of that account, and in purſuance of this intent entered into the ſepulchre, that he might receive a thorough ſatisfaction upon that point. In the latter were two additional circumſtances of importance ſufficient to awaken the curioſity of a leſs zealous diſciple than St. Peter, whoſe affection for his Lord was, like his natural temper, fervent and impetuous. When he heard therefore from Joanna and the other women of a viſion of angels, who had appeared to them at the ſepulchre, and informed them that Chriſt was riſen, can we wonder at his running thither a ſecond time, in hopes of receiving ſome confirmation of the truth of that report, which, though treated by the reſt of the apoſtles as an idle tale, he certainly gave credit to, as the whole tenor of this paſſage implies? I ſay a ſecond time; becauſe, had he gone for the firſt time upon this report of Joanna's, he could have had no inducement to have gone to the ſepulchre a ſecond time from any thing he could learn from the firſt report made by Mary Magdalene, whoſe account contained nothing but what was implied in that given by Joanna and the other women. His behaviour alſo upon this occaſion, when he only ſtooped down and looked into the ſepulchre, ſo different from the former, when he entered into it, is very rational, and conſonant with the purpoſe of this ſecond viſit, which was, to ſee if the angels, who had appeared to the women at the ſepulchre, were ſtill there; this could as well be diſcovered by looking, as by going, into the ſepulchre, as is plain from the ſtory of Mary Magdalene, who ſtooping down and looking in ſaw two angels ſitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain, as St. John tells us.

Having now, as I hope, proved that this viſit of St. Peter's to the ſepulchre, mentioned by St Luke, muſt have been his ſecond viſit, I have

I have cleared this paſſage from two objections that lay againſt it; one, that it did not agree with the relation given by St. John; and the other, that it diſturbed and confounded the whole order of St. Luke's narration; ſo that, notwithſtanding this verſe is wanting both in the Greek and Latin copies of Beza, there is no reaſon for rejecting it, as ſome have propoſed

This point being ſettled, I beg leave to make a few inferences from it, in order to explain ſome paſſages in the preceding verſes of this chapter.

Firſt, then, it is plain from this and the ninth verſe, that St. Peter, after he had been with St. John and Mary Magdalene at the ſepulchre, was now got together with the other apoſtles and diſciples, whom, in all probability, he and John had aſſembled upon the occaſion of Mary Magdalene's report. Peter, I ſay, and John, had in all probability aſſembled the other diſciples and apoſtles, to inform them of what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, and of their having been themſelves at the ſepulchre to examine into the truth of her report. For it is not to be imagined, that theſe apoſtles would not have immediately communicated to the reſt an event of ſo much conſequence to them all, as that of the Lord's body being miſſing from the ſepulchre. And as we now find them gathered together and Peter with them, it is no unnatural ſuppoſition that they had been ſummoned thither by John and Peter: at leaſt their meeting together ſo early in the morning is this way accounted for. Here then we ſee the reaſon of St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary among thoſe which told theſe things to the apoſtles. For although theſe two women were not with Joanna and her ſet, and conſequently could not have joined with them in relating to the apoſtles the viſion of of the two angels, *&c.* yet as the account of their having found the ſtone rolled away, and the body of Jeſus miſſing, had been reported from them by Peter and John to the other apoſtles, before the return of Joanna from the ſepulchre, St. Luke thought fit to ſet them down as evidences of ſome of the facts related by him; and, indeed, it was very proper to produce the teſtimony of the two Marys concerning the ſtone's being rolled away, and the body gone, becauſe they went firſt to the ſepulchre, and firſt gave an account of thoſe two particulars to the apoſtles. I here join the other Mary with Mary Magdalene; for though I think it is pretty plain, from St. John, that ſhe alone brought this account; yet it is remarkable that in her narration ſhe ſays, "We know not where they have laid him," ſpeaking, as it were, in the name of the other Mary and her own; and doubtleſs ſhe did not omit to acquaint them that the other Mary came with her to the ſepulchre; ſo that this report, though made by Mary Magdalene alone, may fairly be taken for the joint report of the two Marys, and was probably ſtyled ſo by Peter and John, and therefore repreſented as ſuch by St. Luke in the paſſage before us.

Secondly, from hence alſo I infer, that the reports of the women were made ſeparately, and at different times. For, if Peter went twice to the ſepulchre, there muſt have been two diſtinct reaſons for his

ſo doing, which reaſons I have ſhewn to be the reports of Mary Magdalene and Joanna: and as there was a conſiderable interval between his firſt and ſecond viſit, a proportionable ſpace of time muſt have intervened between the two reports. After Mary Magdalene's, he had been at the ſepulchre, had returned from thence to his own home, and was now got with the other apoſtles and diſciples, whom, as I ſaid, he and John had in all probability called together before Joanna and the women with her came to make theirs.

Thirdly, as the reports were made at different times, and by different women, as the facts reported were different, and ſaid to have happened all in the ſame place, *viz.* at the ſepulchre, and as theſe facts muſt of conſequence have happened at different times; it follows, that the women, who reported thoſe facts as happening in their preſence, muſt have been at the ſepulchre at different times. For, had they been all preſent at each of theſe events, no reaſon can be given for their differing ſo widely in their relations, and pretty difficult will it be to account for their varying ſo much as to the time of making their reports. Here then is a ſtrong argument in favour of what I have before advanced concerning the women's coming at different times to the ſepulchre, and particularly about the Marys coming thither earlier than the reſt. The reaſon for their ſo doing I have already pointed out in my obſervations upon St. Mark; and have ſhewn, that, upon the ſuppoſition of that reaſon's being the true one, their whole conduct was proper and conſiſtent: which leads me to conſider that of Joanna and the other women, who came ſomewhat later, and with another purpoſe, to the ſepulchre. The former came to take "a view or ſurvey of the ſepulchre," as St. Matthew expreſſly ſays; the latter came to "embalm or anoint the Lord's body," and for that end not only "brought the ſpices, which they had pre-"pared," but were alſo accompanied by other women. Other women muſt mean ſome beſides thoſe who followed Jeſus from Galilee, of whom alone St. Luke ſpeaks in the former part of this verſe and the latter part of the preceding chapter. By theſe therefore, as contradiſtinguiſhed from the Galilean women, he probably means the women of Jeruſalem, a great company of whom followed Jeſus as he was going to his crucifixion, bewailing and lamenting him *. But what number of them went upon this occaſion with the women of Galilee is not any where ſaid; neither, of theſe, are any named beſides Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, though many others followed Jeſus from Galilee to Jeruſalem, as both Matthew, c. 27. v. 55. and St. Mark, c. 15. v. 41. inform us, and were preſent at the crucifixion. It is therefore very probable that moſt, if not all, of thoſe who were wont to miniſter to him in Galilee, who attended him to Jeruſalem, and accompanied him even to Mount Calvary, contributed to this pious office of embalming their Maſter's body, either by buying and preparing the unguents and ſpices, and carrying them to the ſepulchre, or by going to aſſiſt their companions in embalming the body and rolling away the ſtone, for which purpoſe I ſuppoſe the women

* See the 27th verſe of the preceding chapter.

of

of Jeruſalem principally attended, ſince none of them ſeem to have made any purchaſe of ſpices for embalming the body; and for this laſt purpoſe it is farther probable they thought their numbers ſufficient. Accordingly we do not find them ſaying among themſelves, 'Who 'ſhall roll away the ſtone for us,' as the Marys did; nor do we find the Marys bringing the ſpices which they had bought, as is here related of Joanna and thoſe with her; and doubtleſs the Evangeliſts had a meaning in their uſe and application of theſe expreſſions, the former of which is very agreeable to the purpoſe that carried the Marys ſo early to the ſepulchre; as is the latter to that of Joanna, who, coming to embalm the body, brought with her all that was neceſſary for performing that buſineſs, *viz.* the ſpices, and other women to aſſiſt her in rolling away the ſtone, *&c.* The different conduct of the women therefore indicates their ſeveral purpoſes in going to the ſepulchre, and tends to confirm what I have been all along labouring to prove, that they went thither at different times, and not all together.

And as their having had different motives was the cauſe of their going at different times, and dividing themſelves into different companies, ſo from their coming to the ſepulchre in different bodies ſprang a ſubdiviſion of one of thoſe companies, which I ſhall now explain. The two Marys and Salome came firſt to the ſepulchre, and as they drew near, lifting up their eyes, perceived that the ſtone, which was very great, was rolled away from the entrance; upon ſight of which, Mary Magdalene, concluding that the body of Jeſus was taken away, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with it, leaving her two companions at the ſepulchre. That ſhe was alone when ſhe came to thoſe two Apoſtles, is ſtrongly implied by the whole tenor of that paſſage in St. John, where this fact is related, as I have already obſerved; and that ſhe left her companions at the ſepulchre, is as evident from what St. Mark ſays of their entering into the ſepulchre, *&c.* The reaſon of which probably was this: ſhe knew that Joanna and her company would not be long before they came thither, and might therefore think it proper to deſire the other Mary and Salome to wait for them there, to inform them that they had found the ſtone rolled away, *&c.* and that ſhe was gone to acquaint Peter and John with it: but whether this, or any other reaſon, was the cauſe of Mary Magdalene's going by herſelf to Peter and John, and the other two women's ſtaying behind at the ſepulchre, is not very material to enquire; all I contend for is, that ſo it was; and that hence aroſe a ſubdiviſion of this company, that gave occaſion to two appearances of Angels, and as many of Chriſt, and conſequently multiplied the proofs and witneſſes of the reſurrection.

I hope by this time it is ſufficiently evident, that the facts related by the ſeveral women to the Apoſtles were different and diſtinct facts; and therefore I think it unneceſſary to enter into any farther argument upon that point. And although, in the beginning of my obſervations upon this chapter of St. Luke, I noted ſome particulars wherein this ſtory of Joanna differs from that of

the other women, and promiſed to make ſome remarks upon them; yet, for the laſt-mentioned reaſon, I dare ſay, I ſhall be eaſily acquitted of my promiſe, eſpecially as thoſe marks of difference are ſo obvious and ſtriking, that little more need be done than pointing them out to obſervation. I muſt, however, beg leave to obſerve, that the poſition relating to the Angels appearing and diſappearing as they thought proper, laid down in my remarks upon St. John, is farther proved by the manner mentioned here in Saint Luke, which is implied to have been ſudden, not only by the force and import of the expreſſion, but by the remarkable circumſtance of their not being ſeen by the women at their entering into the ſepulchre.

§ 7. Though the following paſſage of this chapter relating to Chriſt's appearance to the Diſciples at Emmaus hath been already produced in part, yet I think it proper to inſert it entire in this place, that, by the reader's having it all before him at once, he may be better able to judge of the obſervation I intend to make upon it.

" And behold two of them went that ſame day to a village cal-
" led Emmaus, which was from Jeruſalem about threeſcore fur-
" longs, and they talked together of all thoſe things that had hap-
" pened. And it came to paſs that while they communed toge-
" ther, and reaſoned, Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with
" them; but their eyes were holden that they ſhould not know
" him. And he ſaid unto them, 'What manner of communica-
" tions are theſe, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are
" ſad?' And one of them, whoſe name was Cleopas, anſwering,
" ſaid unto him, 'Art thou only a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt
" not known the things which are come to paſs there in theſe
" days?' And he ſaid unto them, 'What things?' And they ſaid
" unto him, 'Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, which was a prophet
" mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people; and
" how the chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be condemn-
" ed to death, and have crucified him. But we truſted that it had
" been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and beſide all this,
" to-day is the third day ſince theſe things were done. Yea, and
" certain women alſo of our company made us aſtoniſhed, which
" were early at the ſepulchre; and when they found not his body,
" they came, ſaying, that they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels,
" which ſaid that he was alive: and certain of them which were
" with us, went to the ſepulchre, and found it even ſo as the wo-
" men had ſaid: but him they ſaw not.' Then he ſaid unto them,
" 'O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have
" ſpoken! Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to
" enter into his glory?' And beginning at Moſes and all the pro-
" phets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things
" concerning himſelf. And they drew nigh unto the village whi-
" ther they went, and he made as though he would have gone
" farther. But they conſtrained him, ſaying, 'Abide with us, for

" it

" it is towards evening, and the day is far ſpent.' And he went in " to tarry with them. And it came to paſs as he ſat at meat with " them, he took bread and bleſſed it, and brake and gave to them. " And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he va- " niſhed out of their ſight. And they ſaid one to another, ' Did " not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the " way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?' And they roſe " up the ſame hour, and returned to Jeruſalem, and found the " eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, ſaying, " ' The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' And " they told what things were done in the way, and how he was " known of them in breaking of bread."

Whoever reads this ſtory over with any degree of attention, and conſiders the ſubject of the converſation which our Saviour held with the two diſciples upon the road to Emmaus, will perceive that it muſt have ariſen from what the angels had ſaid to the women related in the preceding verſes of this chapter. To ſet this matter in the cleareſt light, we will put the ſeveral parts together. The angels ſaid to the women, who came to embalm the body of Jeſus, " He is not here, but is riſen. Remember how he ſpake unto " you, when he was yet in Galilee, ſaying, ' The ſon of man muſt " be delivered into the hands of ſinful men, and be crucified, and " the third day riſe again." The words of our Saviour referred to by the angels are theſe (Luke xviii. ver. 31—33.) " Then he took " unto him the twelve, and ſaid unto them, ' Behold we go up to " Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the prophets con- " cerning the ſon of man ſhall be accompliſhed. For he ſhall be " delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully " entreated, and ſpitted on; and they ſhall ſcourge him, and put " him to death, and the third day he ſhall riſe again." The words of the angels theſe two diſciples had heard from the women before they left Jeruſalem; and as they were walking towards Emmaus, and talking over all the wonderful things that had come to paſs, they ſeem at laſt to have fallen into a debate upon the ſubject of theſe words, and the prophecies referred to by them, juſt as our Saviour drew near. That they were engaged in ſome argument or diſquiſition, I infer, not only from the Greek word συζητεῖν, which ſignifies to diſcuſs, examine, or inquire together; but from our Saviour's queſtion, who, apparently, having over-heard ſome part of their diſcourſe, aſks them, Τίνες οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὓς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλήλους; " What arguments are theſe, that ye are debating one " with another, while ye walk and are ſad?" The ſubject of their argument appears in their anſwer to this queſtion, in which they give him to underſtand that they were reaſoning upon the things that had come to paſs concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, " whom," ſay they, alluding plainly to the words of the angels, " the chief " prieſts and our rulers have delivered to be condemned to death, " and have crucified him." And hence ariſes all our ſadneſs, for " we truſted that it had been He which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael;

" and

" and over and above all these things, to-day is the third day since " these things were done" (another allusion to the words of the angels); and " to-day some women of our company" astonished us with an account of their having been early at the sepulchre, and, not finding the body of Jesus, having there been told by angels that he was risen from the dead. And some of our companions, running immediately to the sepulchre, found the report of the women to be true; " but him they saw not." The sufferings, and death, and resurrection, of Jesus were the subjects of their debates, foretold, as the angels bade them remember, out of the prophets, by Christ himself; and the scope of their enquiry was how to reconcile these events with the prophecies, to which they were referred. Part of them they had seen accomplished in the suffering and death of Christ; and that ought to have assured them of the accomplishment of the other part: but either from not understanding, or from a backwardness in believing, all that the prophets had said, they stopped short of this conclusion. For this ignorance and backwardness Christ reproves them; asks them whether (according to the prophets) " Christ ought not to have suf- " fered these things, and to enter into his glory, i. e. to rise again; " and then beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounds " to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The connexion is visible; at the beginning of the chapter the angels refer the Disciples for the proof of the resurrection to the prophets; and here, Christ joining two of those Disciples on the road, is, by their discourse upon that subject, led to explain those prophecies, and prove from them that the Messiah was certainly risen from the dead. And in the like manner is the remaining part of this chapter, to verse the 46th, connected with this and the preceding. For these two Disciples returning to Jerusalem, relate to the Apostles and the rest, whom they found gathered together, what had passed between Christ and them upon the road to Emmaus; and while they were speaking, Christ himself appears; and, after having given them sensible proofs of his being risen from the dead, reminds them, as the angel had done, of the words which he spake unto them in Galilee, saying, " These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with " you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the " law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning " me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might un- " derstand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, " and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the " third day."

The connexion and dependence of the several parts of this chapter upon each other point out to us the reason that induced St. Luke to relate the vision of the two angels to Joanna and the other women; and at the same time prove that vision to be distinct and different from those seen by the Marys; each of which had, in like manner, its separate and peculiar reference to other facts, as will presently be seen.

§ 8.

§ 8. I ſhall now proceed to conſider the appearances of Chriſt to the women on the day of his reſurrection; which, like thoſe of the angels, have alſo been confounded, and from the ſame cauſe, viz, from the want of attending with due care to the ſeveral circumſtances, by which they are plainly diſtinguiſhed from each other. And, 1ſt, I obſerve, that theſe appearances of Chriſt are ſo connected with the appearances of the angels, that theſe having been proved to be diſtinct, it follows that thoſe are diſtinct alſo. 2dly, St. Mark expreſsly tells us, that Chriſt appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, which, according to all propriety of ſpeech, implies that ſhe was alone at the time of that appearance, as I have ſaid once before. But I think it beſt to ſet down the paſſages themſelves, of St. John and St. Matthew, in which theſe appearances are related. John, chap. xx. ver. 11. "But Mary ſtood without at the ſepulchre weeping; and as "ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, and looked into the ſepulchre, and "ſeeth two angels in white, ſitting, the one at the head, and the "other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain; and they ſay "unto her, 'Woman, why weepeſt thou?' She ſaith unto them, 'Be"cauſe they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they "have laid him.' And when ſhe had ſaid thus, ſhe turned herſelf "back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and knew not that it was Jeſus. Je"ſus ſaith unto her, 'Woman, why weepeſt thou? Whom ſeekeſt "thou?' She ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, 'Sir, "if thou haſt borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, "and I will take him away.' Jeſus ſaith unto her, 'Mary!' She turned "herſelf, and ſaith unto him, 'Rabboni!' which is to ſay, 'Maſter.' "Jeſus ſaith unto her, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended unto "my Father; but go to my brethren; and ſay unto them, I aſcend "unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' "Mary Magdalene came and told the diſciples that ſhe had ſeen the "Lord, and that he had ſpoken theſe things unto her." Matth. ch. xxviii. ver. 9. "And as they went to tell his diſciples, behold, Je"ſus met them, ſaying, 'All hail!' And they came and held him by "the feet, and worſhiped him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, 'Be not "afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there ſhall "they ſee me."

After having produced theſe two paſſages, it would be waſting both time and words, to go about to prove the appearances therein mentioned to be different. Compare them, and you will find them diſagree in every circumſtance; in the place, the perſons, the actions, and the words, of which laſt I muſt obſerve, that they refer to two different events viz. the aſcenſion of Chriſt into heaven, and meeting his diſciples in Galilee, of which they were prophecies; and by which they, and conſequently theſe appearances of Chriſt, were not long after verified, though diſcredited at firſt, and treated as idle tales.

I have now gone over the ſeveral particulars of the hiſtory of the reſurrection, related in the Four Evangeliſts, have examined them with all the attention I am capable of, and with a ſincere deſire of diſcovering

vering and embracing the truth; and have, as I think, made out the following points: 1ſt, That the women came at different times, and in different companies, to the ſepulchre: 2dly, That there were ſeveral diſtinct appearances of angels: 3dly, That the angels were not always viſible, but appeared and diſappeared, as they thought proper: 4thly, That theſe ſeveral facts were reported to the Apoſtles at different times, and by different women: 5thly, That there were two diſtinct appearances of Chriſt to the women: and 6thly, That St. Peter was twice at the ſepulchre. Theſe points being once eſtabliſhed, all the objections againſt this part of the Goſpel-hiſtory, as contradictory and inconſiſtent, entirely vaniſh and come to nought. That very learned and ingenious men have been embarraſſed by theſe objections is ſome excuſe for thoſe who firſt ſtarted them, and thoſe who have lately inſiſted upon them. Their having now received an anſwer (if that will be allowed), is a clear proof that it was always poſſible to anſwer them, even with a very moderate ſhare of common ſenſe and learning. The nature of the anſwer itſelf, which is founded upon the uſual, obvious, plain ſenſe of the words, without putting any force, either upon the particular expreſſions, or the general conſtruction of the ſeveral paſſages, is an evidence of what I now ſay. So that I muſt needs acknowledge, that its having been ſo long miſſed is matter of far greater ſurprize than its having been hit upon now.

I ſhall here beg leave to ſubjoin a few obſervations of a very eminent and judicious perſon, to whoſe inſpection I ſubmitted theſe papers; and in whoſe approbation of them I have great reaſon to pride myſelf. They are as follows:

"To prove the appearances at the ſepulchre to be different, and "made to different perſons, two things concur.

"I. The ſeveral accounts as given by the evangeliſts.

"II. The circumſtances which attended the caſe.

"The firſt point is fully conſidered; and of the ſecond it is very "juſtly remarked, that the women having agreed to be early at the "ſepulchre, it fell out naturally, that ſome came before others. Now, "there being at the place of meeting ſomething to terrify them "as faſt as they arrived; it accounts alſo for their diſperſion, and "their not meeting at all in one body. It may help likewiſe to ac-"count for the manner of delivering their meſſages to the Apoſtles; "ſuppoſing their meſſages not delivered in the ſame order, in point "of time, as the appearances happened. For the moſt terrified might "be the lateſt reporters, though they received their orders firſt. "Which obſervation is favoured by St. Mark's οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπον, "neither ſaid they any thing to any man.

"The difficulty upon ſtating the appearances to be different, and "made to different perſons, ariſes chiefly from Mary Magdalene being "mentioned preſent by every evangeliſt: but there ſeems to be this "reaſon for it; ſhe was at the head of the women and the chief of thoſe "who attended our Lord, and followed him from Galilee; and Mary "Magdalene and the women with her denotes the women who

"came

" came from Galilee, in the same manner that the eleven denotes " the Apostles.

" Three Evangelists say expressly that many women were present at " the crucifixion. Had it been left so generally, we should have had " no account who they were. Therefore St. Matthew, xxvii. 56. " adds, ἐν αἷς ἦν, among whom was Mary Magdalene, &c. So it is " again Mark xv. 40.—St. Luke having said in general terms, that " the women, who followed from Galilee, were spectators of the cru- " cifixion, goes on with the account (xxiv. 1.) of their coming to " the sepulchre, seeing angels, and returning to tell the eleven, and " all the rest. But to give credit to their report, and to correct the " omission in not describing them before, he tells us who they were: " and how does he describe them? Why, by saying they were of the " company of Mary Magdalene: Ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ, &c. xxiv. 10. " which verse admits, perhaps requires, a different reading from that " in our translation.

" These considerations seem to account for her being mentioned " in the transactions of these women, though not always present her- " self. St. Luke says (xxiv. 1.) that, besides the women from Gali- " lee, there were other women there. To distinguish those, who " make the report to the disciples, from the other women, he adds " the words already referred to *.

" It is remarkable, that St. Mark says of the women, mentioned " by him, no more than that they had bought spices to anoint the

* The words of St. Luke deserve a particular examination; they run thus in the Greek: Καὶ ὑποστρέψασαι ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήγγειλαν ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς ἕνδεκα καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς λοιποῖς. Ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ Μαρία καὶ Ἰωάννα καὶ Μαρία Ἰακώβου, καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐταῖς, αἱ ἔλεγον πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ταῦτα. In English, " And turning back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to " the eleven, and to all the rest. Now they, who related those things to the Apostles, " were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with " them, i. e. of their company." As the account of the proceedings of the Galilean women begins in the foregoing chapter, and is carried on without any interruption to the 9th verse of this chapter; so that the several verbs occurring in this and the preceding verses are all governed by the same nominative case, viz. γυναῖκες; in ver. 55 of the 23d chapter, it is evident that ταῦτα πάντα, " all these things," must be taken to extend to all the particulars mentioned in that account, and cannot be confined to the transactions of the sepulchre only; and the same observation holds equally to the ταῦτα in the following verse. The utmost therefore that can be inferred from St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, is, that they were concerned in some of these transactions, and joined in relating some of these things to the Apostles; which is true, for they " sat over " against the sepulchre," when Joseph laid in it the body of the Lord, Matth. xxvii. 61. " And beheld where he was laid;" Mark xv. 47.—They also " had bought sweet spices, " that they might come and anoint him;" Mark xvi. 1. and were the first who came to the sepulchre that morning, and brought the first account of the body's being missing; Matt. and Mark. And though, by comparing the accounts given by the other Evangelists with this of St. Luke, it appears that neither of these women went with Joanna and her company to the sepulchre; yet as they were Galilean women, and bore a part, and a principal part too, in what the women of Galilee were then chiefly employed about, namely, the care of embalming the body of Jesus, there is certainly no impropriety in St. Luke's naming them with Joanna and the rest, as he does in the end of the general and collective account he gives of what was reported and done by the Galilean women. Neither does his naming them appropriate to them any particular part of that general account, any more than his not naming them would have excluded them from their share of those transactions, and the report then made to the Apostles. In this case they would have been included in the general terms of Galilean women; as, by being named, they are distinguished and marked as the most eminent persons and leaders of that company of women who followed Jesus from Galilee, &c.

" body;

" body; enough to shew with what intent they went to the tomb;— " that they had any spices with them, he does not say. But St. Luke " says of those he mentions, that they actually brought with them " the spices; and not only so, but that they had prepared them; that " is, made them fit for the use intended. The several drugs were " bought singly, each by itself at the shop, and were necessarily to be " mixed, or melted together for use: and I imagine that, though all " the women joined in buying the spices, yet the care of getting and " preparing them was left particularly to the women mentioned by " St. Luke: and as they were Galileans, and not at home at Jeru- " salem, and probably unacquainted with the method of embalming " bodies, that they employed some inhabitants of the place to buy " and prepare the spices, and to go with them to apply them to the " body; and these are the τινὲς σὺν αὐταῖς, others with them, in St. " Luke.

" This will account for St. Matthew saying nothing of spices;— " for they had none with them: they set out before those who were " to bring the spices, to see what condition the sepulchre was in: and " their business is properly expressed by θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον, to see the " sepulchre.

" Mary Magdalene was with the first (Matthew and Mark) who " went to the sepulchre; but I think she did not go to the sepulchre " then: as soon as she was in sight of the place, lifting up her eyes " [ἀναβλέψασα, Mark xvi. 4,] and seeing the stone removed, she turned instantly [τρέχει οὖν, John xx. 2.] to tell Peter and John. And " it is plain by her behaviour at her second going, that she had " no share in the fright that seized those who went on after she left " them."

§ 9. Having thus cleared the way, I shall now set down the several incidents of this wonderful event in the order in which, according to the foregoing observations, they seem to have arisen; after premising that our Saviour Christ was crucified on a Friday (the preparation, or the third day before the Jewish sabbath), gave up the ghost about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, and was buried that evening, before the commencement of the sabbath, which among the Jews was always reckoned to begin from the first appearance of the stars on Friday evening, and to end at the appearance of them again on the day we call Saturday: that some time, and most probably towards the close of the sabbath, after the religious duties of the day were over, the chief priests obtained of Pilate, the Roman governor, a guard to watch the sepulchre, till the third day was past, pretending to apprehend that his disciples might come by night, and steal away the body, and then give out that he was risen, according to what he himself had predicted while he was yet alive: that they did accordingly set a guard, made sure the sepulchre, and, to prevent the soldiers themselves from concurring with the Disciples, they put a seal upon the stone, which closed up the entrance of the sepulchre.

The order I conceive to have been as follows.

Very early on the firſt day of the week (the day immediately following the Sabbath, and the third from the death of Chriſt), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in purſuance of the deſign of embalming the Lord's body, which they had concerted with the other women, who attended him from Galilee to Jeruſalem, and for the performing of which they had prepared unguents and ſpices, ſet out in order to take a view of the ſepulchre, juſt as the day began to break: and about the time of their ſetting out, "there was a great earth-"quake: for the angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and "came and rolled back the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre, "and ſat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his "raiment white as ſnow; and for fear of him the keepers did ſhake, "and became as dead men," during whoſe amazement and terror, Chriſt came out of the ſepulchre; and the keepers being now recovered out of their trance, and fled, the angel, who till then ſat upon the ſtone, quitted his ſtation on the outſide, and entered into the ſepulchre, and probably diſpoſed the linen clothes and napkin in that order in which they were afterwards found and obſerved by John and Peter. Mary Magdalene, in the mean while, and the other Mary, were ſtill on their way to the ſepulchre, where, together with Salome (whom they had either called upon, or met as they were going), they arrived at the riſing of the ſun. And as they drew near, diſcourſing about the method of putting their intent of embalming the body of their maſter in execution, "they ſaid "among themſelves, Who ſhall roll us away the ſtone from the "door of the ſepulchre? for it was very great;" and they themſelves (the two Marys at leaſt) had ſeen it placed there two days before, and ſeen with what difficulty it was done. But in the midſt of their deliberation about removing this great and ſole obſtacle to their deſign (for it does not appear that they knew any thing of the guard) "lifting up their eyes," while they were yet at ſome diſtance, they perceived it was already rolled away. Alarmed at ſo extraordinary and ſo unexpected a circumſtance, Mary Magdalene concluding, that, as the ſtone could not be moved without a great number of hands, ſo it was not rolled away without ſome deſign, and that they, who rolled it away, could have no other deſign but to remove the Lord's body, and being convinced by appearances that they had done ſo; ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with what ſhe had ſeen, and what ſhe ſuſpected, leaving Mary and Salome there, that, if Joanna and the other women ſhould come in the mean time, they might acquaint them with their ſurprize at finding the ſtone removed, and the body gone, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the two abovementioned apoſtles with it. While ſhe was going on this errand, Mary and Salome went on, and entered into the ſepulchre, "and there ſaw an angel ſitting on the "right ſide, cloathed in a long white garment, and they were af-"frighted. And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye ſeek Jeſus "of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is riſen, he is not here:

"behold

" behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his " diſciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there " ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you. And they went out " quickly, and fled from the ſepulchre; for they trembled and were " amazed; neither ſaid they any thing to any man; for they were " afraid." After the departure of Mary and Salome, came John and Peter, who, having been informed by Mary Magdalene, that the body of the Lord was taken away out of the ſepulchre, and that ſhe knew not where they had laid him, " ran both together to the " ſepulchre; and the other diſciple [John] out-ran Peter, and " came firſt to the ſepulchre; and he ſtooping down, and looking " in, ſaw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then " cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, " and ſeeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about " his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together " in a place by itſelf. Then went in alſo that other diſciple, which " came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw and * believed; for as " yet they knew not the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the " dead. Then the diſciples went away again unto their own home. " But Mary ſtood without at the ſepulchre weeping; and as ſhe " wept, ſhe ſtooped down, and looked into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth " two angels in white, ſitting, the one at the head, and the other " at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain; and they ſay unto " her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? She ſaith unto them, Becauſe " they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have " laid him. And when ſhe had thus ſaid, ſhe turned herſelf back, " and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and knew not that it was Jeſus. Jeſus " ſaith unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? whom ſeekeſt thou? " She ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou " haſt borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I " will take him away. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary! She turned " herſelf, and ſaith unto him, Rabboni! which is to ſay, Maſter! " Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended " unto my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I " aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your " God." After this appearance of Chriſt to Mary Magdalene, to

* *Believed.*] Commentators have generally agreed to underſtand by this word no more than that St. John believed what Mary Magdalene ſuggeſted, viz. That they had taken away the Lord's body; and they ſeem to have been led into this opinion by the words immediately ſubjoined, " for as yet they knew not the Scripture that he muſt riſe again from " the dead;" which words contain a ſort of an excuſe for their not believing that he was riſen. It is, however, certain that by the word *believe*, when it is put abſolutely, the ſacred writers moſt commonly mean to have, what is called, Faith; and in this ſenſe it is uſed no leſs than three times in the latter part of this chapter. To obviate this objection, retain the uſual ſignification of this verb, and yet reconcile this verſe with the following, it is pretended that Beza's old Greek manuſcript ſays he did not believe, i. e. inſtead of ἐπίστευσεν, it has οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν, or ἠπίστησεν. Inſtead of entering into an examination which of theſe two readings is to be preferred, I ſhall only obſerve, that Beza himſelf, in his Comments upon this paſſage, takes no notice of the various reading above mentioned; on the contrary, he contends that St. John did believe the reſurrection. Theſe are his words: " Et credidit, " ἐπίστευσεν, Chriſtum videlicet reſurrexiſſe, quanquam tenuis adhuc foret hæc fides, & " aliis teſtimoniis egeret, quibus confirmaretur. Joannes igitur ſolus jam tum hoc credi- " dit, &c." See his Greek Teſtament in Folio, printed at Geneva, A. D. 1598. And I own I am moſt inclined to his opinion, for reaſons which will appear in the courſe of this work.

whom

whom St. Mark says expressly he appeared first, the other Mary and Salome, who had fled from the sepulchre in such terror and amazement that "they said not any thing to any man," (that is, as I understand, had not told the message of the angel to some * whom they met, and to whom they were directed to deliver it) were met on their way by Jesus Christ himself, who said unto them, "All "hail! and they came and held him by the feet, and worshiped "him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid, go tell my "brethren that they go inro Galilee, and there shall they see me." These several women and the two apostles being now gone from the sepulchre, Joanna with the other Galilean women, "and "others with them, came bringing the spices which they had pre-"pared for the embalming the body of Jesus, and finding the stone "rolled away from the sepulchre, they entered in; but not finding "the body of the Lord Jesus,. they were much perplexed there-"about, and behold two men stood by them in shining garments; "and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the "earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the "dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake "unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The son of man "must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, "and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words; "and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto "the eleven, and to all the rest. And their words seemed to them "as idle tales, and they believed them not." But Peter, who upon the report of Mary Magdalene had been at the sepulchre, had entered into it, and with a curiosity that bespoke an expectation of something extraordinary, and a desire of being satisfied, had observed that the linen clothes, in which Christ was buried, and the "napkin that was about his head," were not only left in the sepulchre, but carefully wrapped up, and laid in several places; and who from thence might begin to suspect, what his companion St. John from those very circumstances seems to have believed: Peter, I say, hearing from Joanna, that she had seen a vision of angels at the sepulchre, who had assured her that Christ was risen, starting up, ran thither immediately, and knowing that the angels, if they were within the sepulchre, might be discovered without his going in, he did not as before enter in, but stooping down looked so far in as to see the "linen clothes, and departed, wondering in himself at "that which was come to pass." And either with Peter, or about that time, went some other disciples, who were present when Joanna and the other woman made their report, "and found it even so as "the women had said. The same day two of the disciples went to "a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-"score furlongs. And they talked together of all those things that

* Probably John and Peter, who were running with Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre about the time that these women were flying from it, might have been discerned by them at a distance, though the terror they were in might occasion their not recollecting them immediately.—But of this I shall hereafter say something more.

" had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed " together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with " them; but their eyes were holden that they should not know him. " And he said unto them, What manner of communications" [arguments] " are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and " are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, " said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast " not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? " And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, " Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in " deed and word before God, and all the people; and how the " chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to " death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been " He which should have redeemed Israel: and, beside all this, to-day " is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain " women also of our company made us astonished, which were " early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they " came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which " said that he was alive: and certain of them which were with us, " went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had " said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, " and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! " ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into " his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he ex- " pounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning " himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they " went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But " they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards " evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with " them. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took " bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes " were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their " sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn " within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he " opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, " and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered toge- " ther, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen in- " deed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things " were done in the way, and how he was known of them in break- " ing of bread."

This is the order, in which the several incidents above related appear to have arisen; the conformity of which with the words of the evangelists, interpreted in their obvious and most natural sense, I have shewn in my remarks upon the passages wherein they are contained: and although the reasons there given are, I apprehend, sufficient of themselves, to justify the exposition I contend for, yet, for the better confirmation of what has been advanced, I beg leave to lay before you an observation or two, suggested by this very order itself, from whence its aptness and tendency to the great end

to

to which it was in all its parts directed and disposed by the hand of providence, viz. the proof of the resurrection of Christ, will manifestly appear.

§ 10. First, then, by this order, in which all the different events naturally and easily follow, and as it were rise out of one another, the narration of the evangelists is cleared from all confusion and inconsistencies. And, 2dly, the proof of the resurrection is better established by thus separating the women into two or more divisions, than upon the contrary supposition, which brings them all together to the sepulchre; for, in the last case, instead of three different appearances of angels to the women, and two of Jesus Christ, we should have but one of each; whereas, in the former, there is a train of witnesses, a succession of miraculous events, mutually strengthening and illustrating each other, and equally and jointly concurring to prove one and the same fact; a fact, which, as it was in its own nature most astonishing, and in its consequences of the utmost importance to mankind, required the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence. And, I will venture to say, never was a fact more fully proved; as I doubt not to make appear to any one, who with me will consider, 1st, The manner; 2dly, The matter of the evidence; and, 3dly, The characters and dispositions of the persons whom it was intended to convince. By these I chiefly mean the apostles, and disciples of Jesus, who were to be the witnesses of the resurrection to all the world. By the manner, I understand the method and order in which the several proofs were laid before them; and by the matter, the several facts of which the evidence consisted.

I shall begin with the apostles and disciples, for whose conviction the miraculous appearances of the angels, and of Christ himself to the women, were principally designed; and the knowledge of whose general characters, as well as of the particular dispositions of their minds at that time, will throw a light upon the other points proposed to be considered.

The greatest part, if not all, of the apostles and disciples of Jesus, those at least who openly and avowedly followed him, were men of low birth and mean occupations, illiterate, and unaccustomed to deep enquiries and abstracted reasonings; men of gross minds, contracted notions, and strongly possessed with the selfish, carnal, and national prejudices of the Jewish religion, as it was then taught by the Scribes and Pharisees. And hence, although it is evident from several passages in the gospel-history, that, convinced by the many miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth, and the accomplishments of many prophecies in him, they believed him to be the Messiah; yet their idea of the Messiah was the same with that of their brethren the Jews, who, by not rightly understanding the true meaning of some prophecies, expected to find in the Messiah, a temporal Prince, a redeemer and ruler of Israel, who should never die. And so deeply was this prejudice rooted in the minds of the apostles, as well as the rest of the Jews, that although our Saviour constantly disclaimed the

character of a temporal Prince, and upon many occaſions endeavoured to undeceive his diſciples, yet they could not wholly give up their opinion, even after they had ſeen him riſen from the dead, and received that inconteſtable proof of his being the Meſſiah, and of their having miſtaken the ſenſe of that prophecy about his being never to die. For in one of his conferences with them after his reſurrection, they aſk him, whether he would at that time "reſtore "the kingdom to Iſrael *?" with ſo much obſtinacy did they adhere to their former prejudices. This, therefore, being their ſettled notion of the Meſſiah, can we wonder their former faith in him ſhould be extinguiſhed, when they ſaw him ſuffering, crucified, and dying; and, inſtead of ſaving others, not able to ſave himſelf? To prepare them for theſe events, he had indeed moſt circumſtantially foretold his own ſufferings, death, and reſurrection: but the apoſtles themſelves aſſure us, that they did not underſtand thoſe predictions till ſome time after their accompliſhment; and they made this confeſſion at a time, when they were as ſenſible of their former dulneſs, and undoubtedly as much amazed at it, as they now pretend to be who object it againſt them; ſo that their veracity upon this point is not to be queſtioned. Immortality therefore and temporal dominion being, in their opinions, the characteriſtics of the Meſſiah, the ſufferings and death of Jeſus muſt have convinced them before his reſurrection, that he was not the Meſſiah, not that perſon in whom they had truſted as the redeemer and king of Iſrael. And having, as they imagined, found themſelves miſtaken in their faith as to this point, they might with ſome colour of reaſon be cautious and backward in believing any predictions about his riſing from the dead, had they underſtood what theſe predictions meant. The ſtate of mind, therefore, into which the apoſtles fell upon the death of their maſter, muſt have been a ſtate of perplexity and confuſion. They could not but reflect upon his miraculous works, and his more miraculous holineſs of life, and were not able to account for the ignominious death of ſo extraordinary a perſon—a ſtate of dejection and deſpair: they had conceived great expectations from the perſuaſion that he was "the "Chriſt of "God:" but theſe were all vaniſhed; their promiſed deliver, their expected king, was dead and buried, and no one left to call him from the grave, as he did Lazarus. With this life, they might preſume, ended his power of working miracles, and death perhaps was an enemy he could not ſubdue, ſince it was apparent he could not eſcape it; and hence proceeded their deſpair. It was likewiſe a ſtate of anxiety and terror. The Jews had juſt put their maſter to death as a malefactor and impoſtor; what then could his followers expect from his inveterate and triumphant enemies, but inſults and reproaches, and ignominy, ſcourges, chains, and death? The fear of the Jews made them deſert their maſter, when he was firſt ſeized; made Peter, the moſt zealous of the apoſtles, "deny "him thrice," even with oaths and imprecations; and made the apoſtles and diſciples, when they met together, on the day of the

* Acts, chap. i. ver. 6.

reſurrectio

resurrection, to confer upon the accounts they had received of Christ's being risen, retire into a chamber, and shut the door, lest they should be discovered by the Jews. Such then was the state of the Apostles minds upon the death of their Master, full of prejudice, doubt, perplexity, despair, and terror; distemperatures that required a gentle treatment, lenient medicines, and a gradual cure. Which leads me to consider, in the next place, the manner, i. e. the method and order of that evidence by which they were recovered into a state of sanity; and, from deserters of their master, converted into believers, teachers, and martyrs of the Gospel.

§ 11. The first alarm they received was from Mary Magdalene, who early in the morning, on the third day from the burial of our Saviour, came running to inform Peter and John, that she had found the stone rolled from the mouth of the sepulchre, and that the body of the Lord was taken away. This information carried those two apostles thither, who entered into the sepulchre, and found the linen clothes, in which his body had been wrapped, and the napkin that was bound about his head, folded up, and lying in different parts of the sepulchre. These circumstances, trifling as they may seem at first sight, were, if duly considered, very awakening, and very proper to prepare their minds for something extraordinary; since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could, in right reason, be concluded from them. The body, they saw, was gone; but by whom could it be taken away? and for what purpose? Not by friends; for then in all probability they would have known something about it: not by the Jews, for they had nothing to do with it. Pilate, to whom alone the disposal of it belonged, as the body of a malefactor executed by his orders, had given it to his disciples, who laid it in the sepulchre but two days before, and wherefore should they remove it again so soon? Not to bury it; for in that case they would not have left the spices, the winding-sheet, and the napkin behind them. Whoever therefore had removed the body, they could not have done it with a design to bury it; and yet no other purpose for the removal of it could well be imagined. Besides, it must have been removed in the night by stealth, and consequently in a hurry: how then came the winding-sheet and the napkin to be folded up, and disposed in so orderly a manner within the sepulchre? Add to all this, that the stone was very large, and therefore many people must have been concerned in this transaction, not one of whom was there to give an answer to any questions. These, or such like reflections, could not but rise in their minds; and these difficulties could not but dispose them to expect some extraordinary event. His life, they knew, was a life of miracles, and his death was attended with prodigies and wonders; all which could not but come crouding into their memories; and yet none of them at that time (excepting John) believed that he was risen from the dead; "for as yet" (the apostle assures us) "they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead;" that is, they did not understand from the Prophets that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead; being, on the contrary, persuaded,

that theſe very Prophets had foretold the Meſſiah ſhould not die, but abide for ever.

The next information they received was from Joanna *, and the women who accompanied her to the ſepulchre, who acquainted them with two new and very ſurprizing particulars, viz. That they had there ſeen a viſion of angels, and that thoſe angels had told them that Jeſus was riſen, and had moreover reminded them of what himſelf had formerly ſpoken to his diſciples concerning his ſufferings, his death, and his reſurrection on the third day, being foretold by the Prophets. What various reflections muſt theſe two amazing circumſtances immediately ſuggeſt to them! The great difficulty, about the body of their maſter being miſſing, which had ſo much alarmed and puzzled them, was at once ſolved. Angels told the women he was riſen from the dead; and, to induce them the more eaſily to believe ſo aſtoniſhing an event, bade them remember that Chriſt himſelf had, not only from the ſpirit of prophecy, with which they knew he was endowed, but from the Prophets alſo, predicted his own ſufferings,

* I have placed this report of Joanna next to the relation above-cited made by Mary Magdalene, and before the ſecond report made by her, and that of the other two Marys; becauſe, by what the two diſciples, who were going to Emmaus, ſay to Jeſus, it is evident that they had heard the report of Joanna, and had not, when they left the reſt of the diſciples, heard either of the laſt mentioned reports. Farther, by their uſing the firſt perſon plural in ſpeaking of thoſe to whom this report was made, as ſome women of our company made us aſtoniſhed, compared with what St. Luke ſays at the 9th verſe, of the women returning and telling all thoſe things to the eleven and all the reſt, it looks as if they were of the number of thoſe who were preſent when this report was made; and that St. Peter was of that number is evident, and ſo, I think, were all the eleven, and many other of thoſe called diſciples, aſſembled together, probably by John and Peter, as was before obſerved. Theſe ſeveral points being admitted, it will follow, that the report of Joanna and thoſe with her was made to the eleven and all the reſt, previouſly to the ſecond report of Mary Magdalene and that of the other two Marys, though the events which gave occaſion to the two latter were in order of time prior to that related by Joanna; for if any of thoſe who were preſent, when Joanna related what had happened to her at the ſepulchre, had heard that Chriſt had appeared to Mary Magdalene and the two other Marys, they would, doubtleſs, have mentioned it upon that occaſion, in which caſe it muſt have been heard, and would as certainly have been mentioned by the two diſciples in their converſation with Jeſus on the way to Emmaus; and even ſuppoſing they were not preſent when Joanna made her report, but received it only from ſome who were, it is probable that they who told them the particulars relating to Joanna, and Peter's ſecond viſit to the ſepulchre, would at the ſame time have informed them of the accounts given by Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, had they at that time heard any thing of them. There may indeed be ſome difficulty in accounting for this, eſpecially as the appearance of Chriſt to Mary Magdalene was very early; and it is ſaid, John xx. 18. that ſhe went and told it to the diſciples; and ſtill more expreſsly by St Mark, xvi. 20. And if her zeal and haſte in carrying the news of the ſtone's being removed, and the warmth of her own temper, and the expreſs command of Chriſt to her to acquaint his diſciples, be conſidered, it will appear very probable that ſhe went on this errand immediately; and it is very natural to think that ſhe went directly to Peter this ſecond time, as ſhe did the firſt; and that apoſtle, when he left her at the ſepulchre, went directly home, as did alſo John, John xx, 10. But if he and Peter were gone to acquaint the other diſciples with the Lord's body being miſſing, as is above ſuppoſed, her not finding them immediately is eaſily accounted for; beſides which, many other things might happen unknown to us, to bring Joanna and thoſe with her to Peter and the other diſciples, before they ſaw Mary Magdalene after her ſecond viſit to the ſepulchre, and before the other two Marys came with their meſſage, who, notwithſtanding their nearneſs to the city when Chriſt appeared to them, and the early date of that appearance, might poſſibly not be enough recovered from their fright to deliver their meſſage immediately; or if they were, they might, for the reaſon above given, miſs that Apoſtle [Peter] to whom they were particularly commanded to deliver it, and to whom, therefore, in all probability, they went directly. All theſe things, however, are mere conjectures, and as ſuch I ſubmit them to the judgement of the reader.

and

and death, and riſing again from the dead on the third day. The words of their maſter they well remembered, and were ſo far convinced that the women ſpoke truth. Thoſe parts alſo of this prediction, which related to his ſufferings and death, they had ſeen moſt exactly accompliſhed; and that was a powerful argument for their believing that the reſt might be ſo too: beſides, this was the third day, the very day on which Jeſus had told them he ſhould riſe from the dead. The argument therefore drawn from the teſtimony of the reports, upon which their diſbelief of the reſurrection was principally founded, was here attacked; and the interpretation of their maſter, verified in moſt of the particulars by the event, was here ſet up in oppoſition to that of the Scribes and Phariſees, whoſe leaven they had ſo frequently been cautioned againſt. But then they did not underſtand what was meant by his riſing from the dead. Was he once more to live with them upon the earth? If ſo, where was he? Nobody had as yet ſeen him, neither the women, nor thoſe among them who, upon their report, had gone to the ſepulchre. By his riſing from the dead, therefore, might be meant, that God had taken him into Heaven, as he did Enoch and Elijah; and could they hope he would return from thence to be the redeemer and king of Iſrael? To obviate theſe ſeveral difficulties, and proceed one ſtep farther towards explaining to them the meaning of the reſurrection, they were probably acquainted in the next place by Mary Magdalene, that ſhe had ſeen, not angels only, but Chriſt himſelf, who had appeared unto her as ſhe ſtood weeping at the ſepulchre; that at firſt indeed ſhe did not know him, taking him for the gardener; that, upon his calling her by her name, ſhe knew him; that, having offered to embrace him, he forbade her, giving her for a reaſon that he was not yet aſcended to his Father; but bidding her go, and tell his diſciples, that in a ſhort time he ſhould aſcend to his Father, and their Father, his God and their God. In this relation of Mary Magdalene's were three articles of great importance. 1ſt, A ſtronger proof than any they had hitherto received, of Chriſt's being riſen from the dead: Mary Magdalene had ſeen him. 2dly, He told her he was not yet aſcended to his Father, by which there ſeemed to be ſome hopes given them, that they alſo might have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him. 3dly, The words, "I aſcend to my Father," &c. plainly referred to a converſation he had with them before he was betrayed, in which he told them that he ſhould go to his Father, &c. By theſe words, therefore, they were not only reminded of another prediction of his, but called upon to expect the great things, which were to be the conſequence of his going to the Father, viz. the coming of the Comforter, a power of working miracles; and what would be an earneſt of all theſe things, the joy of ſeeing him again; all which he had promiſed them in the converſation alluded to in this meſſage *. Yet ſome doubts and difficulties ſtill remained. Nobody but Mary Magdalene had ſeen him; and ſhe did not know him at firſt, but took him for the gar-

* See John xiii. 14.

dener. Perhaps the whole was illuſion; but allowing it was Chriſt whom ſhe ſaw, why was ſhe commanded not to touch him? It was probably an apparition, and not Chriſt himſelf. Beſides, wherefore did he not appear to his diſciples, who, according to his own promiſe, were to ſee him again? The whole ſtory therefore might ſtill appear to them an idle viſionary tale.

To deliver them from theſe perplexities, nothing could be better calculated than the account given by the other Mary and Salome, which imported, that they alſo had been at the ſepulchre, where they had ſeen an angel, who not only aſſured them that Chriſt was riſen, but ordered them to tell his diſciples, that they ſhould meet him in Galilee, agreeably to what he himſelf had ſaid to them in his lifetime: that they were ſo amazed and terrified at this viſion, that they fled from the ſepulchre with the utmoſt precipitation, intending to communicate theſe things to the Apoſtles, as the angel had commanded them, but were ſo overcome with fear, that they had not the power to tell what they had ſeen and heard to ſome whom they ſaw in the way: that, as they were going, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf met them, and ſaluting them with an "All hail! bade them not be afraid, but go and "tell his brethren that they ſhould go into Galilee, and that they ſhould "ſee him there;" to which they added "that they went and held him "by the feet and worſhiped him!" And farther they informed Peter, that the angel had expreſsly enjoined them to deliver this meſſage to him in particular. Had the apoſtles and diſciples given credit to this account of Mary and Salome, they could have had but one ſcruple left. Jeſus had now appeared to two women beſides Mary Magdalene; had permitted thoſe women to embrace his feet, and given thereby a ſenſible proof that it was himſelf, and not an apparition, and had alſo appointed a place where they themſelves were to ſee him. The only ſcruple, therefore, that now remained, aroſe from their not having ſeen him themſelves; and, till they did, they ſeemed reſolved to ſuſpend their belief of his being riſen from the dead, and treated all theſe ſeveral viſions of the women as ſo many idle tales.

It is obſervable, that all theſe miraculous incidents followed cloſe upon the back of one another, and conſequently were crouded into a ſmall compaſs of time; ſo that we ought to be the leſs ſurpriz'd at the apoſtles not yielding at once to ſo much evidence. Such a heap of wonders were enough to amaze and overwhelm their underſtandings. They were therefore left for a time to ruminate upon what they had heard; to compare the ſeveral reports together; to examine the Scriptures; and recollect the predictions and diſcourſes of their maſter. To which they were referred both by the angels and himſelf. But the examination of the Scriptures was a work of ſome time; and, in the ſituation in which they then were, their minds undoubtedly were in too great an agitation to ſettle to ſuch an employment with the compoſure and attention that was neceſſary. Beſides, it muſt be remembered, they were a company of illiterate men, not verſed in the interpretations of prophecies, not accuſtomed to long arguments and deductions; and were moreover under the dominion of an inveterate prejudice, authorized by the Scribes and Phariſees,

the prieſts and elders, whoſe learning and whoſe doctrines they had been inſtructed early to revere. To aſſiſt them in their enquiries, and lead them to the true ſenſe of the Scriptures, the only rational means of conquering their prejudices, Chriſt himſelf appeared that ſame day to two of his diſciples who were going to Emmaus; a village about threeſcore furlongs diſtant from Jeruſalem, and whom he found diſcourſing and reaſoning as they went upon thoſe very topicks. Theſe diſciples, as I have already ſhewed, had left Jeruſalem before any of the women who had ſeen Chriſt, had made their report; at leaſt that report had not come to their knowledge. All they had heard was, that ſome women, who had been early at the ſepulchre, had there been informed by angels, that he was riſen from the dead, and put in mind that he himſelf had formerly predicted his reſurrection, by ſhewing out of the Prophets that ſo it was to be. This argument were they debating, when our Saviour joined them; who queſtioning them upon the ſubject of their debate, and the affliction viſible in their countenances, and underſtanding from the account they gave, that they were ſtill unſatisfied as to the main point, and ſeemed to put the proof of his being riſen from the dead upon his ſhewing himſelf alive, rebuked them firſt for their "ignorance and backwardneſs "in believing all that the prophets had ſpoken; and then, beginning "at Moſes and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the "Scriptures the things concerning himſelf." During this whole converſation they knew him not; their eyes were holden, as St. Luke informs us, and for what reaſon is very plain. The deſign of Chriſt in entering into ſo particular an expoſition of the Prophets was to ſhew, that, by making a proper uſe of their underſtanding, they might, from thoſe very Scriptures, whoſe authority they allowed, have been convinced that the Meſſiah ought to have ſuffered as they had ſeen him ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead on the third day. That is, Chriſt choſe rather to convince them by reaſon, than by ſenſe; or at leaſt ſo to prepare their minds, that their aſſenting afterwards to the teſtimony of their ſenſes ſhould be with the concurrence of their reaſon. He had proceeded in the ſame manner with the other diſciples at Jeruſalem, from all of whom he had hitherto with-holden the evidence of ſenſe, having not appeared to any of them, excepting Peter, till after the return of theſe two diſciples to Jeruſalem. This proceeding, at once ſo becoming the Lord of righteouſneſs and truth, and the freedom of man as a reaſonable being, muſt have been prevented, had Chriſt diſcovered himſelf to them at his firſt appearing. Wonder and aſtoniſhment in that caſe had taken place of reaſon, and left them, perhaps, when the firſt ſtrong impreſſion was a little worn away, in doubt and ſcepticiſm. But now having duly prepared them to receive the teſtimony of their ſenſes, he diſcovered himſelf to them, and that by an act of devotion, in "breaking of bread," which among the Jews was always attended with thankſgiving to God, the giver of our daily bread. But there ſeems to have been ſomething peculiar in this action, upon which account it was mentioned by St. Luke in his narration of this hiſtory, and by the two diſciples themſelves when they related to the

apoſtles

apoſtles at Jeruſalem, what had happened to them at Emmaus. The manner undoubtedly of breaking the bread, and probably the form of words in the thankſgiving, were particular to our Saviour; and theſe latter perhaps were the very ſame with thoſe made uſe of by him at the laſt ſupper. At leaſt, theſe two actions are deſcribed by St. Luke in the ſame words, viz. "He took bread and gave thanks, and brake "it, and gave to them." If ſo, how ſtrongly were they called upon by this action to remember their Lord, who had inſtituted that very form in remembrance of his death! and how properly did it accompany that diſcovery of himſelf which he now thought fit to make to them! Accordingly they were convinced, and returned that ſame hour to Jeruſalem, where they found the Apoſtles aſſembled together, and debating apparently upon the ſeveral reports they had heard that day, and particularly upon what Peter had told them, to whom ſome time that day Chriſt had appeared. But as neither the time, nor the particulars of that appearance, are recorded by the evangeliſts, I ſhall not pretend to ſay any thing more about it, than that the apoſtles ſeem to have laid a greater ſtreſs upon that alone, than upon all thoſe related by the women. For upon theſe two diſciples coming into the chamber, they accoſt them immediately, without waiting to hear their ſtory, with "The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to "Simon," but make no mention of any of his appearances to the women. After which, the two diſciples related what had happened to them in the way to Emmaus, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. But St. Mark ſays, * they did not believe theſe two diſciples any more than they had done the others to whom Chriſt had appeared; which words ſeem to contain a ſort of a contradiction to what they themſelves ſeem to acknowledge in ſaying, "the Lord hath riſen indeed, and hath appeared unto Si-"mon." Let us therefore examine theſe two paſſages with a little more attention. The whole paſſage, in St. Mark, is this; "After "that he appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked, "and went into the country, and they went and told it unto the reſi-"due, neither believed they them." To which I muſt add the following: † "Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven, as they ſat at "meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardneſs of "heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after "he was riſen." By comparing theſe paſſages in St. Mark with the parallel paſſages in St. Luke, it will appear what the belief of the apoſtles was, and what their unbelief. The parallel to the firſt has been already conſidered. The courſe of my narration leads me now to conſider that to the ſecond; and, in doing of this, I ſhall take occaſion to obſerve how they illuſtrate and explain each other, and thereby vindicate theſe two evangeliſts from the ſuſpicion of contradicting one another's account.

The apoſtles, by the ſeveral relations of the women, which they received early in the morning, and upon which they had had ſufficient time to comment and reflect, (for it was now night) and af-

* Chap. xvi. 13. † Ver. 14.

terwards

terwards by thoſe of Peter and the two diſciples from Emmaus, being ripe for conviction, Chriſt vouchafed to give them that evidence they ſeemed ſo much to deſire, and which having been granted to others, they had ſome reaſon to hope for and expect. Accordingly, as the diſciples from Emmaus had juſt finiſhed their ſtory, "Jeſus "himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them, Peace "be unto you: and they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed "they had ſeen a ſpirit." Here then was their error, and in this conſiſted their unbelief. They acknowledged, indeed, that Chriſt was riſen from the dead, but did not believe that he had bodily appeared to thoſe who pretended to have ſeen him, and to have had ſufficient evidence upon that point. Theſe, St. Mark ſays, they did not believe; and we learn from St. Luke, that, when he appeared to them, they did not believe even their own eyes, but ſuppoſed they had ſeen a ſpirit. That this was the unbelief, for which, as we read in St. Mark, our Saviour rebuked them, is evident from what follows after in St. Luke. "And he ſaid unto them, why are ye troubled? "And why do thoughts [reaſonings, Διαλογισμα] ariſe in your hearts? "Behold my hands and my feet? that it is I myſelf: handle me and "ſee; for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have. And "when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them his hands and his feet." We may judge of the diſtemper by the remedy. He bade them feel and ſee that it was no ſpirit, but he himſelf. Why? becauſe they doubted of it: and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they doubted of it, notwithſtanding the teſtimony of people, whoſe veracity they had no reaſon to ſuſpect, and who brought credentials with them that could not be forged. It being evident from theſe paſſages, thus compared together, that the unbelief of the Apoſtles, mentioned by St. Mark, and the belief which they profeſſed, according to St. Luke, were both partial, thoſe two evangeliſts are thus perfectly reconciled.

But if any one ſhould ſtill inſiſt that theſe words of the apoſtles and diſciples, "the Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Si-"mon," imply that they then had a full and explicit belief of the reſurrection of Chriſt, as from the force of the word "indeed" I am myſelf inclined to think, and ſhould demand how they came afterwards to diſbelieve the two diſciples, and to ſuſpect even that appearance which themſelves ſaw? I anſwer, that in the appearance of Chriſt to the two diſciples, and in that afterwards to themſelves, were ſome circumſtances which at firſt, and till more ſatisfactory proofs were given, might naturally tend to confound and unſettle the faith which they had taken up upon the evidence of Peter: becauſe Chriſt appearing firſt to the two Diſciples in another form, and vaniſhing out of their ſight as ſoon as he was made known to them, ſeemed better to ſuit with the idea of his being a ſpirit, than a living body; and his entering into the room where they were aſſembled, the doors being ſhut, rather confirmed that idea, in the firſt ſudden impreſſion it made upon their minds; which miſtake, in both caſes, aroſe from their not attending ſufficiently to the miraculous powers belonging

belonging to Chriſt, to the operations of which his being in the body was no impediment. This inadvertency, and want of due conſideration in the apoſtles and diſciples, juſtifies our Saviour's rebuking them for not believing them which had ſeen him. But the doubts occaſioned by it were ſoon overcome by thoſe farther proofs of the reality of his body, which he afterwards vouchſafed to give them: and by this explanation, as well as by the former, the evangeliſts are cleared from contradicting each other.

However, neither did theſe proofs entirely ſatisfy them; for, as the hiſtory goes on, "while they yet believed not for joy, and "wondered, Chriſt ſaid unto them, Have ye any meat? And they "gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh, and an honey-comb, and he "took it and did eat before them." So much compaſſion did he ſhew for their infirmity! and ſo much care did he take, that not even a ſhadow of a ſcruple ſhould remain in their minds, upon a point of the utmoſt importance to the great buſineſs he came about! And perceiving now that every doubt was vaniſhed, and they were perfectly convinced, he ſaid to them (purſuing the argument begun by the angels, and carried on by himſelf with the two diſciples in the way of Emmaus), "Theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you, while "I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled, which were "written in the law of Moſes, and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms, "concerning me. Then opened he their underſtandings, that they "might underſtand the Scriptures, and ſaid unto them, Thus it is "written, and thus it behoved Chriſt (i. e. Meſſiah) to ſuffer, and "to riſe from the dead on the third day; and that repentance, and re-"miſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name, beginning at Jeru-"ſalem; and ye are witneſſes of theſe things."

The Apoſtles having now had every kind of evidence laid before them, that was requiſite to convince them of the reality of the reſurrection of Chriſt; and being moreover enabled by the gift of that Holy Spirit, which inſpired the prophets, to underſtand the true meaning of thoſe ſacred oracles, to which their maſter conſtantly referred them for the marks and characters of the Meſſiah, which he affirmed to be found in him, as well in his ſufferings and death, and riſing again from the dead on the third day, as in the miraculous actions and unſpotted holineſs of his life; were again left to conſider and examine at leiſure the ſeveral proofs of the reſurrection, which they had heard and ſeen that day; and particularly thoſe ariſing from the accompliſhment of the predictions contained in the Holy Scriptures. That they might apply themſelves to this examination with that cool, deliberate, and ſober attention, that is more eſpecially neceſſary to the rooting out inveterate and religious prejudices, and planting in their ſtead a rational and well-grounded faith, ſuch as is required of all thoſe who believe in Chriſt, and particularly neceſſary for them, who were to be witneſſes of all theſe things to all the world, he forbore viſiting them any more for eight days; after which he condeſcended to ſubmit himſelf to a farther examination, in order to remove the unreaſonable ſcruples of St. Thomas, one of the apoſtles; who, having not been

been preſent when our Saviour appeared to the other diſciples, and conſequently not having ſeen him himſelf, refuſed to believe upon the report of others ſo wonderful a thing as Chriſt's riſing from the dead; nay, he was reſolved not to be convinced with ſeeing only. "Except I ſhall ſee in his hands, ſays he, the print of the nails, and "put my finger into the print of the nails, and thurſt my hand into "his ſide, I will not believe." Jeſus, when he appeared to his diſciples, ſhewed them his hands and his feet, as a proof of his being the ſame Jeſus that was crucified. This circumſtance, among the reſt, the Apoſtles undoubtedly related to St. Thomas, as an evidence by which they were aſſured that it was their maſter whom they had ſeen; and upon this evidence St. Thomas alſo was contented to believe: but firſt he would be convinced that it was real; he would not only ſee the print of the nails, which might be counterfeited, he would "put his finger into the print of the nails, and thurſt his hand into "his ſide. Eight days after, therefore, when his Diſciples were again "met together in a chamber, and Thomas was with them, Jeſus "came, the doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, Peace "be unto you. Then ſaith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, "and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it "into my ſide; and be not faithleſs, but believing." What could St. Thomas do, but yield immediately to the evidence he had required? And what could he ſay to one, who appeared to know all his thoughts, but "My Lord, and my God!" Jeſus ſaith unto him, "Thomas, becauſe thou has ſeen me, thou haſt believed: "bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed."

After this there ſeems to have been no ſcruple left in the minds of any of the Apoſtles, to whom however Chriſt was ſtill pleaſed to continue his viſits, * being ſeen of them, as St. Luke teſtifies, "forty "days after his paſſion, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the "kingdom of God." But as hitherto all the appearances of Chriſt ſeem to have been intended only for the conviction of his Apoſtles; and thoſe that follow rather for their confirmation and inſtruction in the faith and doctrines of the Goſpel, ſacred writers, who have been very particular in the accounts they give us of the former, have mentioned but very few of the latter: I ſay few; for I think it highly probable that the appearances of Chriſt to his apoſtles for the remaining thirty days, were more than they have thought proper to record. And the reaſon of this different proceeding is very obvious. The apoſtles are to be conſidered both as witneſſes of the miracles and the ſufferings, the death and the reſurrection, of Jeſus Chriſt, and teachers and preachers of his doctrine. In the character of witneſſes, a circumſtantial account of the means and opportunities they had of knowing certainly the ſeveral facts atteſted by them, muſt needs give great force and credit to their evidence; whereas, in that of preachers, it is ſufficient if their auditors were ſatisfied in general that the doctrines taught by them were derived from the inſtructions, and autho-

* Acts, chap. i. ver. 3.

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rized by the commiſſion given them by their maſter to teach all nations; and of this, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, poured out not upon the Apoſtles only, but by them upon all believers, were full and unqueſtionable proofs. But among the laſt-mentioned appearances of Chriſt there are two, which, by reaſon of their connexion with the former, ought by no means to have been omitted: the firſt relates to Chriſt's meeting his diſciples in Gallilee, which was foretold by Chriſt himſelf before his death, repeated by the angels to the women at the ſepulchre, and afterwards confirmed to them again by Chriſt. The accompliſhment of this prophecy, it was certainly neceſſary to ſhew; accordingly we have it in St. Matthew, who ſays, "Then the eleven diſciples went into Galilee, unto a mountain "where Jeſus had appointed them, and when they ſaw him they "worſhiped him: but others doubted." The ſecond, in like manner, correſponds with what was ſpoken by our Saviour to Mary Magdalene in theſe words: "But go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, "I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your "God;" which words, as I have already obſerved, referred to a converſation he had with his diſciples the night before he was betrayed, wherein he told them, 1ſt, That he ſhould go to his Father; 2dly, That he would come to them before he went to his Father; 3dly, That after he was gone to the Father, he would ſend them a comforter, even the Spirit of Truth; who would "teach them all things, and "bring all things to their remembrance, whatſoever he had ſaid unto "them." And, 4thly, That whoſoever believed on him ſhould have the power of working as great, nay greater miracles than he did. The fulfilling of which ſeveral promiſes, or prophecies, I ſhall now ſet down, only premiſing, that the ſecond article was abundantly accompliſhed by the ſeveral appearances above-mentioned, as we have already ſeen. The firſt, viz. his aſcenſion into heaven, came to paſs in this manner:——* "And being aſſembled together with them, "he commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, "but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which, ſaith he, ye have "heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye ſhall be "baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence. When they "therefore were come together, they aſked of him, ſaying, Lord, "wilt thou at this time reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael? And he ſaid un- "to them, It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which "the Father hath put in his own power; but ye ſhall receive power "after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you; and ye ſhall be wit- "neſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Sa- "maria, and unto the uttermoſt parts of the earth. And when he "had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and "a cloud received him out of their ſight. And while they looked "ſteadfaſtly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men ſtood "by them in white apparel, which ſaid unto them, Ye men of Galilee, "why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus, which is "taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come, in like manner as

* Acts, chap. i. ver. 4—14.

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" ye have ſeen him go into heaven."——The hiſtory of the accompliſhment of the third article is in the next chapter, and in theſe words: " And when the day of pentecoſt was fully come, they were " all with one accord in one place; and ſuddenly there came a ſound " from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe " where they were ſitting: and there appeared unto them cloven " tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them, and they were " filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, " as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Je- " ruſalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. " Now when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together " and were confounded, becauſe that every man heard them ſpeak in " their own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, " ſaying one to another, Behold, are not all theſe which ſpeak Gali- " leans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein " we were born? Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwel- " lers in Meſopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, " and Aſia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of " Libya, about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and Proſe- " lytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them ſpeak in our tongues " the wonderful works of God."—For a proof of the completion of the fourth article, I ſhall refer the reader to the hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, in which he will find numberleſs inſtances of the power of working miracles in the apoſtles; " by whoſe hands" (ſays the hiſtorian, ch. v. ver. 12.) " were many ſigns and wonders wrought " among the people,—in ſo much that they brought forth the ſick " into the ſtreets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at leaſt " the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by might overſhadow ſome of them. " There came alſo a multitude out of the cities round about Jeruſalem, " bringing ſick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean ſpi- " rits, and they were healed every one."

From this view of the method and order, in which the ſeveral proofs of the reſurrection were laid before the apoſtles, it is manifeſt that, as Chriſt required of them a reaſonable and well-grounded faith, ſo did he purſue the moſt proper and effectual means for the attaining that end. With this purpoſe, inſtead of bearing down their reaſon, and dazzling their underſtanding by a full manifeſtation of himſelf all at once, we ſee him letting in the light upon them by little and little, and preparing their minds by the gradual dawning of truth, that they might be able to bear the full luſtre of the ſun of righteouſneſs riſing from the grave; to conſider and examine, and know that it was he himſelf, and to aſſure the world it was impoſſible they could be deceived. And as, by this proceeding in general, he intended to open their underſtanding by degrees, and conduct them ſtep by ſtep to a full conviction and knowledge of the truth; ſo by refering them to the Scriptures, and ſubmitting himſelf to the ſcrutiny and judgement of their ſenſes, he did not only wave all authority, but require them in a ſtrong and particular manner to exerciſe their reaſon in examining the evidence brought before them; for which purpoſe alſo

he both improved their faculties by the infusion of his Holy Spirit, and gave them sufficient time, and frequent opportunities, "shewing "himself to them alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs," says the author of the Acts, "being seen of them forty days, and "speaking of the things pretaining to the kingdom of God." And most certainly never was evidence more fairly offered to consideration, never there inquiry put upon a more rational method, as indeed there never were any facts that could better abide the test. This I shall now endeavour to evince, by considering the facts themselves, upon which the proof of the resurrection, and consequently the faith of the Apostles, was established.

§ 12. The facts, of which the evidence of the resurrection consisted, may be comprized under three heads: 1st, The appearances of the angels; 2dly, the appearances of Christ to the women; and 3dly, the appearances of Christ to the disciples and apostles.

1st, The appearances of the angels at the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection were many, each differing from the other, and seen by different persons; as, 1st, by the Roman soldiers, who kept the sepulchre; 2dly, by the other Mary and Salome; 3dly, by Mary Magdalene; 4thly, by Joanna, and those with her.

The angel, who appeared to the Roman soldiers, was cloathed with terror, "His face was like lightning, and his raiment white as "snow." His coming was attended with an earthquake, and his strength so much beyond that of mortals, that he singly rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; which, according to Beza's copies, both Greek and Latin, was so large that twenty men could hardly roll it. I have already taken notice of the two purposes, upon which this angel of the Lord descended from heaven, viz. to fright away the soldiers, and to open the sepulchre, that the women, who were then on their way thither, and the others both women and disciples, and Jews, who were to come thither that day, might have free entrance into it, and see that the body of Jesus was not there. The reasonableness of these two purposes, I think, every body must acknowledge; and that is a very material point towards establishing the credibility of the fact; especially if we consider that, without the interposition of heaven, the sepulchre would probably not have been opened, nor the guard removed, till after the expiration of the third day, the day prefixed by Christ for his rising from the dead; in which case, though no earthly power could have hindered Christ, who is the power of God, from coming out of the grave, yet the door of the sepulchre remaining closed, and the guard continuing there, must effectually have prevented that examination into the state of the sepulchre, which convinced St. John that Christ was risen, and which, if it did not of itself amount to a clear proof of the resurrection, was at least admirably calculated to prepare the minds, not of the Apostles only, but of all the Jews who were at that time in Jerusalem, to admit such other proofs, as were afterwards offered to their consideration. For it is not to be imagined, that none of the disciples of Jesus visited the sepulchre that day. The story told by the soldiers undoubtedly soon spread all over Jerusalem; and bare curiosity, without

out any other motive, was ſurely ſufficient to carry numbers to ſurvey the ſcene of ſo aſtoniſhing an event: a ſepulchre, hewed out of a rock, cloſed with a vaſt ſtone, and that ſtone but the evening before ſealed up by the high prieſts and elders, and committed to a guard of Roman ſoldiers; this ſepulchre, notwithſtanding all theſe precautions, opened, as one part of the ſoldiers reported, by an angel from heaven, or, as others ſaid, by the diſciples of Jeſus; who, as was pretended, "came by night, and while the guard ſlept, ſtole away the "body of Jeſus," which in effect was miſſing. Theſe two different and irreconcileable reports muſt have likewiſe induced others to go, and conſider upon the ſpot, by examining into the nature and ſituation of the ſepulchre, the probability of that report, which charged the diſciples with having ſtolen away the body of Jeſus; for as upon that ſuppoſition, none but human means are ſaid to have been employed, in order to know whether thoſe means were proportioned to the effects aſcribed to them, it was neceſſary to compare what was done with the manner in which it was pretended to be performed. And upon ſuch an examination, I think, it muſt have appeared to every conſiderate man, if not impoſſible, at leaſt improbable in the higheſt degree, for the diſciples of Jeſus to have ſtolen away his body, while the guards were at their poſts. For ſuppoſing the diſciples to be the reverſe of what they were, bold, enterprizing, cunning impoſtors, and capable of making ſo hazardous an attempt; can it alſo be ſuppoſed, that a company of Roman ſoldiers, trained up under the ſtricteſt diſcipline, and placed there but the evening before, ſhould be all aſleep at the ſame time, and ſleep ſo ſoundly and ſo long, as not to be awakened, either by rolling away the ſtone (which, as it ſingly cloſed up the mouth of the ſepulchre, muſt certainly have been very large), or by the carrying off the body? The former of which required a great number of hands, and the latter muſt have appeared to have been done with ſome deliberation, ſince the linen clothes in which the body was wrapped, and the napkin that was wound about the head, were folded up and laid in different parts of the ſepulchre. The ſepulchre was hewed or hollowed into the ſolid rock; ſo that they could have no thought of making a ſecret paſſage into it, by digging through the rock, and conſequently muſt have gone in by that only entrance, which was cloſed up by a great ſtone, and guarded by a band of Roman ſoldiers: theſe ſeveral circumſtances, duly attended to, were of themſelves ſufficient to invalidate the teſtimony of thoſe ſoldiers who pretended that the diſciples ſtole away their maſter's body while they were aſleep. But they were, on the other hand, very ſtrong arguments for the credibility of that account, in which all the ſoldiers at firſt agreed, and which part of them undoubtedly had publiſhed, before the other ſtory was put into their mouths by the chief prieſts and elders. For in this relation a cauſe is aſſigned proportionable to all the effects; effects, which as they were viſible and notorious, as well as extraordinary, could not fail of exciting the natural curioſity of mankind to enquire by what means they were brought about. The ſolution is eaſy and full. "An an-"gel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, rolled away the ſtone from

" the mouth of the ſepulchre, and ſat upon it: his countenance was " like lightning, and his raiment white as ſnow." This accounts for the terror of the ſoldiers, their deſerting their poſt, their precipitate flight into the city; for the ſtone's being rolled away from the mouth of the ſepulchre, even while it was ſurrounded by a Roman guard; for the ſepulchral linen being left in the grave, folded up, and lying in different places; and for the body's being miſſing; and therefore the cauſe here aſſigned, however wonderful, is moſt likely to be true.

Nor could the miracle be an objection to the credibility of this account among the Jews; who, upon the authority of their lawgiver, their prophets, and their hiſtorians, were accuſtomed to think the working of miracles very conſiſtent with the idea of God, the all-mighty and all-wiſe creator of heaven and earth; though ſome modern philoſophers have pretended to diſcover from reaſon, that " miracles are " to the common ſenſe and underſtanding of man utterly impoſſible, " and contrary to the unchangeableneſs of God." This point, indeed, if it could be made out (as moſt certainly it cannot), would of itſelf be a ſufficient anſwer to all the arguments that can be brought in ſupport of the credibility, not of this ſtory only, but of all the evangelical hiſtory, and the Jewiſh religion alſo; and would ſuperſede all other objections to them, as needleſs and ſuperfluous. Let thoſe, then, who upon the force of this ſpeculation deny Chriſtianity, here try their ſtrength: let them prove that miracles are utterly impoſſible, &c. or, till they do, let them give leave to thoſe who are of a contrary opinion, to inſiſt that in the preſent caſe the miracle can be no objection to the credibility of the fact; and that, as I have ſaid, it could have been none among the Jews in particular, who from their infancy had heard, and read, and believed the " mighty ſigns and wonders wrought " by God for his people Iſrael;" had expected to find in the Meſſiah a power of working miracles; and had evidence of many performed among them by Jeſus and his diſciples. And, indeed, the appearance of an angel, upon this occaſion, ſo far from being an objection, was highly proper, I had almoſt ſaid neceſſary. Jeſus had, but two days before, been put to death by the rulers of the Jews, as an impoſtor; one, who by the authority of Beelzebub caſt out devils, and by aſſuming the character of the Meſſiah blaſphemed God. His ſepulchre alſo was guarded by a band of ſoldiers, under the pretence of preventing his diſciples from carrying on the impoſture begun by their maſter, by ſtealing away his body, and giving out that he was riſen from the dead, in conſequence of what he had ſaid before his crucifixion. Under theſe circumſtances, the atteſtation of heaven was neceſſary, to ſhew that God, though he had ſuffered him to expire on the croſs, had not forſaken him; but, on the contrary, had co-operated with him even in his ſufferings, his death, and burial, and reſurrection from the dead on the third day; having, by the ſecret workings of his providence and his almighty power, accompliſhed in every point the ſeveral predictions of Jeſus relating to each of thoſe events; events, which at the time of thoſe predictions none but God, or an eye enlightened by his omniſcient ſpirit, could foreſee, and which nothing leſs than his all-

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controuling power could bring about. The deſcent therefore of the angel of the Lord from heaven, and his rolling away the ſtone from the ſepulchre, was a viſible proof that the finger of God was in the great work of the reſurrection, was a proper honour done to him, who claimed to be the Son of God, and unanſwerably refuted the impious calumnies of thoſe, who upon account of that claim ſtyled him an impoſtor and blaſphemer.

§ 13. What has been juſt ſaid, of the propriety and neceſſity of an angel's deſcending from heaven upon the preſent occaſion, is applicable in general to the ſeveral appearances of angels ſeen by the women, which I ſhall examine in the next place, taking it for granted that the miraculouſneſs of ſuch appearances will be no longer urged as an argument againſt their poſſibility. The only thing then remainining to be conſidered, in this examination, is the internal evidence which theſe ſeveral viſions carry along with them of reality and truth; for by ſome they have been treated as pure illuſions, and by others as downright falſhoods. The principal argument made uſe of, to prove their falſhood, is founded upon a ſuppoſed contradiction and inconſiſtency in the ſeveral accounts given of them by the Evangeliſts; which argument having been thoroughly diſcuſſed in the foregoing part of this diſcourſe, I muſt refer the reader thither for an anſwer to it. That theſe appearances were illuſions, the effects of ſuperſtition, ignorance, and fear, hath been inſinuated rather than aſſerted; but hath never, that I know of, been attempted to be proved. I ſhall not, therefore, amuſe myſelf with a vain ſearch after arguments, which, I preſume, are not eaſy to be found; or they would have been produced by thoſe who have laboured with ſo much diligence to expoſe and ridicule the faith of Chriſtians; but leaving ſuch to make good their aſſertion, who ſhall think fit to maintain it, I ſhall proceed to lay down a few obſervations tending to prove the reality and truth of theſe appearances of the angels to the women.

The angel firſt ſeen by the women was that deſcribed by St Mark, in the form of a "young man ſitting" [within the ſepulchre] "on the right ſide, clothed in a long white garment," at the ſight of whom the women [Mary and Salome] diſcovering great ſigns of fear, he ſaith unto them, "Be not affrighted; ye ſeek Jeſus of "Nazareth, which was crucified; he is riſen, he is not here. Be"hold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his "diſciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there "ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you." That this was a real viſion, and no phantom of the imagination, is evident from theſe particulars. 1ſt, As it does not appear, from this or any other account, that the women, upon their coming to the ſepulchre, were under any ſuch terrors or perturbation of mind as are apt to fill the fancy with ſpectres and apparitions. On the contrary, they went thither a little after day-break, prepared and expecting to find the dead body of Jeſus there, and purpoſing to embalm it; about the doing of which they had been calmly conferring by the way: So,

2dly, by their coming with a design to embalm the body, it is plain they had no notion either of his being already risen, or that he would rise from the dead; and, therefore, 3dly, had the angel been the creature of a disturbed imagination, they would scarcely have put into his mouth a speech, that directly contradicted all the ideas upon which they proceeded but one moment before. 4thly, It is to be observed farther, that the illusion must have been double; two senses must have been deceived, the hearing and the sight; for the angel was heard as well as seen; and though this frequently happens in dreams, and sometimes perhaps in a delirium, or a fit of madness, yet I question whether an instance, exactly parallel in all its parts to the case here supposed, was ever known; for no two people dream together exactly alike, nor are affected in a delirium with exactly the same imaginations. 5thly, The words spoken by the angel refer to others spoken by Christ to his disciples before his passion, in which he told them, that after "he was risen, he would "go before them to Galilee." This promise or prediction the angel here reminds them of, bids them tell the disciples from him to go into Galilee, and promises them that Christ will meet them there. Now, as not only the resurrection, but the personal appearance of Christ also, is implied in these words, the reason given above under the third particular concludes in the present case more strongly against supposing them to have proceeded only from the imagination of the women; for the sudden change of whose opinion, from a disbelief of the resurrection into a full and explicit belief of it, no adequate cause can be assigned. For if it should be allowed that they knew of this prediction of Christ's (which however does not appear), yet the business that brought them to the sepulchre makes it evident, that till that instant they did either not recollect, not understand, or not believe it: and if it be farther said, that upon their entering into the sepulchre, and not finding the body of Jesus, this prediction might naturally come at once into their heads, and they might as suddenly and as reasonably believe Christ to be risen, as St John did, whose faith was built upon no other evidence than what these women had now before them; I answer, that allowing St. John, when he is said to have first believed the resurrection, had no other evidence than these women now had or might have had, yet it is to be observed, that St. John was in a fitter disposition of mind to reflect and judge upon that evidence than the women. St. John ran to the sepulchre upon the information given him by Mary Magdalene, that the body of Jesus was removed from thence, and laid she knew not where, nor by whom; and, as the sepulchre was at some distance from his habitation, many thoughts must naturally have arisen in his mind tending to account for the removal of the body, and among the rest, perhaps, some confused and obscure hope, that he might be risen from the dead, pursuant to many predictions to that purpose delivered by him to his disciples. But whatever his thoughts were at the time of his coming to the sepulchre, about which it must be owned

owned nothing can be offered but mere conjecture; it is certain he had leisure to reflect upon the predictions of his master, and to examine into the state of the sepulchre, which both he and Peter did (and that implies some deliberation and presence of mind), and that after this deliberate examination he departed quietly to his own home. Whereas the women are represented as falling into the utmost terror and amazement immediately upon their entering into the sepulchre; and continuing under the same consternation till they were met flying from thence by Christ himself. Under such a disorder of mind, can we suppose them capable of recollecting the predictions of Christ about his resurrection? considering the proofs of their accomplishment arising from the state of the sepulchre? and persuading themselves at once that he was not only risen from the dead, but would personally appear to his disciples? And then immediately upon this conviction fancying they saw an angel, and heard him assure them in a distinct manner that Christ was risen; call them to view the place where he had been laid, and bid them tell his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee? In a word, if this supposed illusion proceeded from a strong persuasion that Christ was risen from the dead, whence arose that belief? If that belief arose from a cool reflection upon the predictions of our Saviour, and the state of the sepulchre (the cause of St. John's faith) whence came their terror? which, if not previous to the apparition of the angel, was at least prior to the words, "Be not af-"frighted," with which he first accosted them. If it be urged, that this terror was of the nature of those causeless and unaccountable terrors called panics, it may be answered, that this is giving us a name instead of a reason, and is, in effect, saying just nothing at all, or saying no more than that they were affrighted, but nobody can tell why or wherefore. 6thly, It is observable, that the speech of the angel to the women consists of ten distinct particulars: As, 1, "Be not affrighted:" 2. "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was cru-"cified:" 3. "He is risen:" 4. "He is not here:" 5. "Behold "the place where they laid him:" 6. "But go your way, tell his "disciples," 7. "And Peter." 8. "That he goeth before you into "Galilee," 9. "There shall ye see him." 10. "As he said unto "you." The order and connection of which several particulars are no less remarkable than their number; and therefore, taking both these considerations into the account, I leave any one to judge whether it be conceivable that women, under so great a terror and distraction of mind as to fancy they saw and heard an angel when there was no such thing, should be able to compose a speech for this phantom of their fear and imagination, containing so much matter, order, and reason, and proceeding upon the supposition that they were not then convinced that Christ was risen from the dead, though the belief of his resurrection is presumed not only to have proceeded, but even to have occasioned this illusion.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this first appearance of the angel to the women, because the settling the nature of that will save us the trouble of entering into a particular discussion

of the reſt; the ſeveral articles of which will fall under one or other of the foregoing obſervations. All I ſhall do therefore is, to note the different circumſtances obſervable in each of them, and from thence endeavour to raiſe another argument for the truth and reality of all.

The viſion, we have juſt now conſidered, was of one angel; that ſeen by Mary Magdalene was of two; as was likewiſe that reported by Joanna and thoſe with her. And whereas the firſt angel was found, by the women upon their entering into the ſepulchre, ſitting on the right ſide, the two laſt mentioned appearances were abrupt and ſudden: for the angels which Mary Magdalene diſcovered ſitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of had been laid, were not ſeen by Peter and John, who juſt before Jeſus had entered into the ſepulchre, and viewed every part of it with great attention; and Joanna, and "thoſe with her," had been ſome time in the ſepulchre before they ſaw any angels; which angels ſeem alſo to have appeared to them in a different attitude from thoſe ſeen by Mary Magdalene, and by the other Mary and Salome. As the number of the angels, and the manner of their appearance, was different, ſo likewiſe were the words ſpoken to them by the women, and the behaviour of the women upon thoſe ſeveral occaſions. Mary and Salome were touched with fear, and fled from the ſepulchre in the utmoſt terror and amazement. Joanna, and "thoſe with her," were ſtruck with awe and reverence, and bowed down their faces to the earth; but Mary Magdalene ſeems to have been ſo immerſed in grief at not being able to find the body of the Lord, as to have taken little or no notice of ſo extraordinary an appearance; ſhe ſees, hears, and anſwers, the angels without any emotion, and without quitting the object upon which her mind was wholly fixed, and till ſhe was awakened out of her trance by the well-known voice of her maſter calling her by her name. But here let us ſtop a little, and aſk a queſtion or two. Could this appearance then be an illuſion? Could a mind ſo occupied, ſo loſt in one idea, attend at the ſame time to the production of ſo many others of a different kind? Or could her imagination be ſtrong enough to ſee and converſe with angels, and yet too weak to make any impreſſion on her, or call off her attention from a leſs affecting, leſs ſurpriſing ſubject? Real angels, indeed, ſhe may be ſuppoſed to have ſeen and heard, and not to have regarded them; but apparitions raiſed by her own fancy could not have failed engaging her notice: for although, when we are awake, we cannot avoid perceiving the ideas excited in us by the organs of ſenſation, yet is it, in moſt inſtances, in our power to give to them what degree of attention we think fit; and hence it comes to paſs, that when we are earneſtly employed in any action, intent upon any thought, or tranſported by any paſſion, we ſee, and hear, and feel a thouſand things, of which we take no more notice than if we were utterly inſenſible of them, as every one's daily experience can teſtify. But to the ideas not proceeding immediately from ſenſation, but formed within us by the internal operation of our minds, we cannot

cannot but attend, becauſe in their own nature they can exiſt no longer than while we attend to them. Of this kind are all the phantoms that haunt our ſleeping or waking dreams: for ſo all extaſies, deliriums, and the ravings of madneſs, may not improperly be called; and, whatever may be the phyſical cauſe that upon theſe occaſions ſets the mind to work, and influences her imagination, ſhe is certainly more than paſſive in theſe productions, and is generally ſo attentive to them, as to diſregard, during her tranſports, all the opportunities of external objects, or to blend and colour with the prevailing idea all thoſe ariſing from the information of the ſenſes. From all which it is evident, that the mind cannot apply herſelf to the contemplation of more than one object at a time; which, as long as it keeps poſſeſſion, excludes or obſcures all others. Mary Magdalene, therefore, having taken it ſtrongly into her head, upon ſeeing the ſtone rolled away from the mouth of the ſepulchre, that ſome perſons had removed the body of the Lord, in which notion ſhe was ſtill more confirmed after her return to the ſepulchre with Peter and John, and grieving at being thus diſappointed of paying her laſt duty to her deceaſed maſter, whoſe body, as Peter his moſt zealous, and John his moſt beloved diſciple, knew nothing of the removal of it, ſhe might imagine was got into the hands of his enemies, to be expoſed, perhaps, once more to freſh inſults and indignities, or at leaſt to be deprived of the pious offices which the duty and affection of his followers and diſciples were preparing to perform. Mary Magdalene, I ſay, falling into a paſſion of grief at this unexpected diſtreſs, and abandoning herſelf to all the melancholy reflections that muſt naturally ariſe from it, with her eyes ſuffuſed with tears, and thence diſcerning more imperfectly, looking as it were by accident, and while ſhe was thinking on other matters, into the ſepulchre, and ſeeing angels, might, according to the reaſoning above laid down, give but little heed to them, as not perceiving on a ſudden, and under ſo great a cloud of ſorrow, the tokens of any thing extraordinary in that appearance. She might take them, perhaps, for two young men, which was the form aſſumed by thoſe who appeared to the other women, without reflecting at firſt that it was impoſſible they ſhould have been in the ſepulchre without being ſeen by John and Peter, and improbable that they ſhould have entered into it after their departure, without having been obſerved by her. Intent upon what paſſed within her own boſom, ſhe did not give herſelf time to conſider and examine external objects; and therefore knew not even Chriſt himſelf, who appeared to her in the ſame ſudden and miraculous manner; but, "ſuppoſing him to be the gardener," begged him to tell her, if he had removed the body, where he had laid it, that ſhe might take it away. By which queſtion, and the anſwer ſhe had made to the angels immediately before, we may perceive what her thoughts were ſo earneſtly employed about; and thence conclude ſtill farther, that the angels were not the creatures of her imagination, ſince they were plainly not the objects of her atten-

tion. The appearance, therefore, of the angels was real. But to return from this digreſſion.

If the ſeveral appearances of the angels, examined ſeparately, may be ſhewn to carry with them evident marks of reality and truth, the conſidering and comparing them together will ſet that point in a yet ſtronger light; ſuch, we preſume, as will intirely clear up every doubt in the minds of thoſe who ſeem inclined to believe any thing poſſible, but that the Goſpel ſhould be true. For, both the number, the manner, the variety, and nature of the circumſtances of theſe viſions, and their being ſeen by different perſons at different times, make it, according to the natural courſe of things, utterly incredible that there ſhould have been in them either illuſion or impoſture. Many inſtances, perhaps, of illuſions in ſingle perſons, and even in numbers (for nothing is more contagious than ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm), may be produced; how well authenticated, it will be time enough to enquire when we know what they are. But, I believe, it will be generally found, upon a ſtrict examination, that whenever any number of people have fallen into ſuch an illuſion, as, by the force of imagination only, to hear and ſee ſpectres and apparitions, the imagination or artifice of ſome one among them hath given birth to the phantom; and working, upon minds already diſpoſed to ſuperſtition, enthuſiaſm, or credulity, or cunningly prepared, perhaps, for that particular occaſion, hath led them eaſily to ſee and hear things that exiſted only in their own prepoſſeſſed and over-heated fancies. But nothing of all this can be pretended in the preſent caſe. The women, by whom theſe different viſions of angels were ſeverally ſeen, had no communication with each other during the time of theſe appearances, as is evident from the whole tenor of this hiſtory: Mary and Salome were fled from the ſepulchre before Mary Magdalene returned; and Mary Magdalene was departed from thence again before Joanna, and "thoſe with her," came thither; ſo that they could not catch the illuſion from one another; and that their minds, at the time of their coming to the ſepulchre, were very far from being diſpoſed to form imaginations of Chriſt's being riſen from the dead, is evident from the buſineſs that carried them thither. They came to perform the laſt offices uſually paid to the dead; and, by embalming the body, to compleat the interment of their deceaſed maſter; which, by the coming on of the Sabbath, they had been obliged to leave unfiniſhed; and when, upon entering into the ſepulchre, they found not the body, it was more natural for them to think, with Mary Magdalene, that ſome perſons had taken it away, and laid it they knew not where, than to conclude it was riſen from the dead; and it is plain, that Joanna, and "thoſe with her," were in this way of thinking; for "when they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jeſus, "they," ſays St. Luke, "were much perplexed thereabout:" i. e. they knew not what was become of the body, could not account for its being miſſing, and were therefore in great diſtreſs and anxiety about

about it; which would not have happened, had they believed that he had risen from the dead.

If, from what has been said, it may seem reasonable to conclude, that the appearances of the angels were not the effects of illusion, the phantoms of a distempered visionary mind, it will, I think, be more easily granted, that they were not the operations of artifice and imposture. For, without examining who could be the actors, or what the motives of an impostor of this kind, there are evidences enough, arising from the circumstances of these several appearances, to shew, that the powers that produced them were more than human: such, for example, is the earthquake occasioned by the descent of the first angel, the amazing brightness of his countenance, which, St. Matthew tells us, was like lightning, and the prodigious strength, which appeared in his singly rolling away a stone, that was large enough to close up the entrance into the sepulchre; and, what was common to all the angels, the faculty of becoming visible or invisible as they thought proper. These certainly were characteristical marks of an agent endowed with privileges and powers superior to the limited abilities of man, whose operations cannot go farther than his knowledge of the laws and powers of nature; and how far short of such wonderful effects as these that knowledge would carry him, I leave the most ingenious professor of natural magic to determine.

2. I come now, in the second place, to consider the appearances of Christ himself to the women, which were two, the first to Mary Magdalene, the second to the other Mary and Salome. But I shall not have occasion to dwell long upon this head, since the appearances of the angels having been proved to be real put these appearances of Christ more out of doubt and suspicion. The angels affirmed that he was risen from the dead; and, if he was risen, it was natural to expect he would appear. The main difficulty consisted in his getting loose from the bands of death, and breaking the prison of the grave; and, therefore, whoever upon the testimony of the angels believed the resurrection (as all those must have done who acknowledged them to be real angels) would not, if they saw Christ himself, be very apt to call in question the reality of his appearance. But though the testimony of angels, affirming that Christ was risen from the dead, renders his appearing afterwards less liable to doubt and question; yet, before we admit the reality of every such appearance as may be pretended, I grant it is reasonable to expect some farther proofs, though perhaps not so many or so strong as if no such previous evidence had been given. And in the case of Mary and Salome it may be suggested, that their very belief of the resurrection of Christ, joined to the disorder and amazement they were then under, might help to convince them too easily of the reality of his appearance, though at the same time it might be nothing but a spectre of their imagination, and a mere illusion: let us therefore examine what evidence may be collected, from the account given of this appearance, to induce us to think, that these women were not deceived; and the evidence, I believe, will be found sufficient. They had the attestation of their sight, their hearing, and their feeling:

feeling: by the two firſt the voice and countenance of their Lord might be known; and by the laſt they might be aſſured, that it was no ſpectre that they heard and ſaw, but a body conſiſting of fleſh and bones. One of theſe proofs, indeed, was wanting to Mary Magdalene, Chriſt forbade her to touch him; and yet any one, who conſiders with due attention the circumſtances of this appearance, will find ſufficient reaſon to be perſuaded that it was Chriſt himſelf who appeared to her. For, firſt, he had ſtood by her ſome time, had ſpoken to her, and ſhe anſwered him before ſhe knew him to be Chriſt; on the contrary, ſhe took him for the gardener: by all which it is manifeſt, that the ſpectre, if it was one, was not of her creating *. Her mind was otherwiſe engaged; and, had it been either at leiſure, or diſpoſed to raiſe apparitions, it is moſt likely ſhe would have called upon ſome perſon, with whom ſhe had more acquaintance and concern than a keeper of a garden, whom probably ſhe had never known nor ſeen before. 2dly, he called her by her name; by which it appeared that he knew her; ſo did ſhe. it ſeems, diſcover him: for turning immediately about, ſhe accoſted him with the reſpectful title of "Rabboni, my Maſter," and, as may be inferred from the enſuing words of Chriſt, offered to embrace him. His voice and his countenance convinced her that it was Chriſt himſelf. 3dly, In theſe words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet "aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay to them, I "aſcend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," is contained a moſt clear proof that it was Chriſt himſelf who uttered them. To underſtand this, it muſt be remembered, that theſe words allude to a long † diſcourſe which our Saviour held to his diſciples the very night in which he was betrayed; wherein he told them, that he ſhould leave them for a ſhort time ("a little while and ye ſhall not "ſee me"); and that he would come to them again, though but for a ſhort time ("and again a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me") "becauſe" (added he) "I go to my Father." By the phraſe "I go to my Father," Chriſt meant his final quitting the world, as he himſelf explained it to his diſciples, who did not then underſtand either of the abovecited expreſſions. ‡ "I came forth from the Father," ſays he, "and am "come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father." But leſt they ſhould fall into deſpair at being thus forſaken by him, for whom they had forſaken all the world, he at the ſame time promiſed to ſend them a Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, who ſhould § "teach them all things, bring to their minds whatſoever he had ſaid "unto them; ſhould guide them into all truth ‖, ſhew them things "to come, and abide with them for ever; and that whoever believed "ſhould be able to do greater works [i. e. Miracles] than he did, be-"cauſe he was to go to the Father;" and that, finally, though they for a ſeaſon ſhould be ſorrowful, yet ſhould ** "their ſorrow be turned "into joy, and that joy ſhould no man take from them." Theſe were magnificent promiſes; promiſes, which, as the diſciples could not but

* See the preceding article. † See John, chap. xiv. xv. and xvi. ‡ John xvi. 28.
§ Ibid. xiv. 26. ‖ Ch. xvi. 13. Ibid. xiv. 16. ** Ch. xiv. xiv. 20—21.

remember

remember Chriſt had made to them, ſo they might be aſſured that no one but Chriſt was able to make them good; and therefore, when they came to reflect ſeriouſly upon the import of theſe words, "touch "me not, for I am not yet aſcended to my Father; but go to my "brethren and ſay to them, I aſcend to my Father and your Father," "to my God and your God," it was impoſſible for them to conclude otherwiſe than that it was Chriſt himſelf who appeared and ſpoke to Mary Magdalene. For as the latter expreſſion, "I aſcend to my Fa-"ther," &c. implied a remembrance, and conſequently a renewal, of thoſe promiſes, which were to take place after his aſcenſion to the Father; ſo did the former, "I am not yet aſcended to my Father," give them encouragement to expect the performance of that other promiſe of his coming to them again before his aſcenſion, by giving them to underſtand, that he had not yet quitted this world: and I take Chriſt's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch [or embrace] him, to have been meant as a ſignification of his intending to ſee her and his diſciples again; juſt as in ordinary life, when one friend ſays to another, "don't take leave, for I am not going yet," he means to let him know that he purpoſes to ſee him again before he ſets out upon his journey. That this is the true import of the words, "touch me "not," is, in my opinion, evident, not only from the reaſon ſubjoined in the words immediately following, "for I am not yet aſcended "to my Father;" (by which expreſſion, as I have ſhewed above, Chriſt meant he had not finally quitted the world;) but from theſe farther conſiderations: Chriſt, by ſhewing himſelf firſt to Mary Magdalene, intended, doubtleſs, to give her a diſtinguiſhing mark of his favour, and therefore cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed to have deſigned at the ſame time to have put a ſlight upon her, by refuſing her a pleaſure which he granted not long after to the other Mary and Salome; and yet this muſt be ſuppoſed, if "touch me not" be underſtood to imply a prohibition to Mary Magdalene to embrace him, for any reaſon conſiſtent with the regard ſhewn to the other women, and different from that now contended for, namely, becauſe he intended to ſee her and his diſciples again. On the contrary; if theſe words be taken to ſignify only a put-off to ſome fitter opportunity, they will be ſo far from importing any unkindneſs or reprehenſion to Mary Magdalene, that they may rather be looked upon as a gracious aſſurance, a kind of friendly engagement to come to her again; and, in this ſenſe, they correſpond exactly with Chriſt's purpoſe in ſending this meſſage by her to his diſciples; which, as I have obſerved before, was to let them know that he remembered his promiſe of coming to them again, and was ſtill in a condition to perform it, not having quitted this world; and of his intention to perform it, this his refuſing to admit the affectionate or reverential embraces of Mary Magdalene, "who loved "much, for much had been forgiven to her," was an earneſt, as his coming to them again would be a pledge of his reſolution to acquit himſelf in due time of thoſe promiſes which were not to take effect till after his final departure out of this world. And thus will this whole diſcourſe of our Saviour to Mary Magdalene be in all its parts intelli-

gible,

gible, rational, and coherent; whereas, if it be ſuppoſed that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch Chriſt for ſome myſtical reaſon, contained in the words, "for I am not yet aſcended to my Father," it will be very difficult to underſtand either the meaning or intent of that meſſage, which ſhe was commanded to carry to the diſciples; and ſtill more difficult to account for his ſuffering, not long after, the embraces of the other Mary and Salome. To the ſame, or even greater difficulties, will that interpretation of this paſſage be liable, which ſuppoſes that the prohibition to Mary Magdalene was grounded upon the ſpiritual nature of Chriſt's body, which, it is preſumed, was not ſenſible to the touch or feeling. And, indeed, both theſe reaſons for the behaviour of Chriſt to Mary Magdalene are overturned by his contrary behaviour to the other Mary and Salome. But if the ſenſe I contend for be admitted, it will be no difficult matter to account for this difference of his behaviour on thoſe two occaſions. Why he forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him, has already been explained; why he permitted the other Mary and "Salome to hold him by the feet "and worſhip him," I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew. Theſe laſt-mentioned women, as * St. Mark informs us, were ſo terrified and amazed at the ſight and words of the angel, who appeared to them in the ſepulchre, that although they † ran with a deſign to tell the diſciples what they had heard and ſeen, as the angel had commanded them, yet, through the greatneſs of their confuſion and diſorder, they had neglected to deliver this important meſſage to ‡ ſome whom they ſaw

* Ch. ult. † Matth. xxviii. 8.

‡ That theſe words, "Neither ſaid they any thing to any man," muſt be limited to ſome certain time, will, I believe, be readily allowed; for it cannot be imagined, that after all the other appearances of the angels, &c. were publiſhed, theſe women only never opened their lips "to any man" about what they had ſeen and heard at the ſepulchre: The queſtion then will be, how long they may be ſuppoſed to have forborn ſpeaking of it? And this, I think, was no longer than during the time of their flying from the ſepulchre, and till they were met by Chriſt himſelf; becauſe the only reaſon here aſſigned for their "not ſaying any thing to any man," viz. "For they were afraid," (or affrighted rather) being removed by Chriſt's appearing to them, &c. it is reaſonable to believe (if it is not implied), that their ſilence laſted no longer than the only cauſe of it, their terror. Beſides, as St Mark breaks off the narration of what happened to theſe women very abruptly, ſhort of Chriſt's appearing to them, in order to relate his appearance to Mary Magdalene, which, indeed, was previous to it, though ſubſequent to the appearance of the angel ſeen by theſe women at the ſepulchre, what he ſays of their "not ſaying any thing to any man" cannot be taken to extend beyond the period where he choſe to break off his narration, without ſuppoſing him guilty of a needleſs impropriety. And if theſe words, "Neither ſaid they any thing to any man," be conſtrued to ſignify that they did not tell what they had ſeen and heard to ſome, whom they ſaw as they were flying from the ſepulchre, it ſeems rational to conclude, that theſe were ſome of the diſciples to whom they were ordered to deliver the meſſage of the angel, and to whom they would probably have delivered it, had they not been under ſo great a terror, and amazement. For had the perſons, whom they ſaw, been any other than the diſciples of Jeſus, it is not likely that St. Mark would have taken any notice of their "not ſaying "any thing to any man," ſince it is reaſonable to imagine they would not, even though they had not been affrighted, have told the meſſage of the angel, &c. to any but the diſciples. And as the time of Peter and John's running to the ſepulchre, upon the firſt report of Mary Magdalene, coincides with that of theſe women flying from it, it is no improbable conjecture, that theſe were the perſons whom they ſaw in their way, at a diſtance perhaps, and coming by a different road to the ſepulchre; eſpecially if it be conſidered that, as the words of St. Mark, "neither ſaid they," &c. ſeem to carry with them an imputation of neglect upon theſe women, though he at the ſame time both accounts for it, and excuſes it, by adding, "for they were affrighted;" ſo the ſame evangeliſt hath before acquainted us, (ver. 7.) that they were ordered by the angel to deliver the meſſage he gave them to Peter in particular.

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in their way; for ſo, with all the comentators, I underſtand theſe words of St Mark, "neither ſaid they any thing to any man, for "they were afraid." That this teſtimony therefore of the angel to the reſurrection of Chriſt, and the aſſurance given to the diſciples, that they ſhould ſee their maſter in Galilee, might not be loſt, either by the women's forgetting, through the greatneſs of their amazement, what the angel had ſaid to them, or through a ſuſpicion of its having been a meer illuſion, neglecting or ſcrupling to tell it, Chriſt himſelf thought proper to appear to them, to calm their minds, diſperſe their terror, obviate their doubts. With this view he firſt accoſts them with the gracious ſalutation of "All hail!" then ſuffers them not only to approach him, but to "hold him by the feet and worſhip him;" and, laſtly, bidding them diſmiſs their fears, orders them, in confirmation of what the angel had ſaid to them, to tell his diſciples from him to "go into Galilee," aſſuring them with his own mouth, "that they "ſhould ſee him there." Every word, we ſee, tended to inſpire them with courage and confidence; and the gracious influence of every word upon their minds could not but be rendered ſtill more powerful and efficacious by his ſuffering them to embrace him. After this familiar inſtance of his favour and complacence, and this ſenſible proof of his being really and bodily riſen from the dead, there could be no room left for doubt or terror: conviction, certainty, and joy, muſt have baniſhed thoſe uneaſy paſſions for ever from their breaſts. And hence it appears, that the different conduct of Chriſt, on theſe two occaſions, was owing to the different circumſtances attending them; to which it was moſt wiſely ſuited. Mary Magdalene's grief (the only diſorder of mind ſhe then laboured under) for the ſuppoſed loſs of her maſter's body, was ſoon diſperſed, upon her hearing him call her by her name, and ſeeing him ſtand by her; ſhe was immediately convinced that it was Chriſt, and teſtified her conviction by giving him the title of "Rabboni, my maſter." She wanted not (and therefore there was no need of giving her) any farther proofs; but, ſatisfied with what ſhe had ſeen and heard, ſhe went to the diſciples, and told them ſhe "had ſeen the Lord;" and that he had ſaid ſuch and ſuch things to her. But terror, the moſt untractable of all paſſions when exceſſive, had ſeized upon the other Mary and Salome; a terror, which, had it proceeded from the unexpected and ſupernatural appearance of an angel, was more likely to be confirmed than removed by the like appearance of Chriſt, had he not proceeded gently with them, and by his gracious words and demeanour given them encouragement and permiſſion to familiarize themſelves with him by degrees, and take, in their own way, what proofs they thought proper to remove their fears or doubts, and convince them that their affectionate and beloved Maſter was in reality reſtored to them again from the grave.

But beſides the aſſurance given by Chriſt to his diſciples in the words here ſpoken by Mary Magdalene, of his intention to perform his promiſes of coming to them again, &c. I cannot help thinking he had a farther meaning, which, though not ſo obvious, is, however, in my opinion,

opinion, equally deducible from thoſe words with the other juſt now mentioned. That remarkable expreſſion, "I aſcend to my Father," Chriſt undoubtedly made uſe of upon this occaſion to recall to his diſciples minds the diſcourſe he held to them three nights before, in which he explained ſo clearly what he meant by "going to his Fa-"ther," that they ſaid to him, "lo! now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and "ſpeakeſt no parable *." But this was not the only expreſſion that puzzled them; they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of, "a little while and ye ſhall not ſee me, and again a little while and ye "ſhall ſee me," which they likewiſe confeſſed they did not underſtand. But Chriſt did not think fit to clear up their doubts at that time, and left thoſe words to be expounded by the events to which they ſeverally related, and which were then drawing on apace. For that very night he was betrayed, and ſeized, and deſerted by his diſciples, as he himſelf had foretold but a very few hours before, upon their profeſſing "to believe that he came forth from God:" the next day he was crucified, expired upon the croſs, and was buried. Upon this melancholy cataſtrophe the diſciples could be no longer at a loſs to underſtand what Chriſt meant, when he ſaid to them, "a little while and "ye ſhall not ſee me:" he was gone from them, and, as their fears ſuggeſted, gone for ever, notwithſtanding he had expreſsly told them, that he would come to them again; and to thoſe words, "a little "while and ye ſhall not ſee me," he added, "and again a little while "and ye ſhall ſee me." This latter expreſſion, one would think, was full as intelligible as the former; and as the one, now expounded by the event, was plainly a prophecy of his death, ſo muſt the other be underſtood as a prophecy of his reſurrection from the dead. But, if they underſtood it in that ſenſe, they were very far from having a right notion of the reſurrection from the dead; as is evident from their imagining, when Chriſt firſt ſhewed himſelf to them after his paſſion, that they ſaw a ſpirit; even though they had juſt before declared their belief "that he was riſen indeed, and had appeared to Si-"mon." The reſurrection of the body, it ſhould ſeem from this inſtance, made no part of their notion of the reſurrection from the dead: to lead them therefore into a right underſtanding of this moſt important article of faith, Chriſt, in ſpeaking to Mary Magdalene, and by her to his diſciples, makes uſe of terms which ſtrongly imply his being really, that is, bodily, riſen from the dead. "I am not yet," ſays he, "aſcended to my Father; but go unto my brethren, and ſay unto "them, I aſcend unto my Father," &c. The words "I go to my "Father," Chriſt, as has already been obſerved, explained by the well-underſtood phraſe of leaving the world; and to this explanation the words immediately foregoing give ſo great a light, that it is impoſſible to miſtake his meaning. The whole paſſage runs thus, "I came "forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and again I "leave the world, and go to the Father." By the expreſſion, "I "am come into the world," Chriſt certainly meant to ſignify his being and converſing viſibly and bodily upon earth; and therefore by the

* John xvi. 29.

other

other expreſſion, " I leave the world," he muſt have intended to denote the contrary to all this, viz. his ceaſing to be and converſe viſibly and bodily upon earth; and ſo undoubtedly the diſciples underſtood him to mean, when they ſaid to him, " now ſpeakeſt thou plain-" ly, and ſpeakeſt no parable." But as they very well knew that the uſual road, by which all men quitted this world, lay though the gates of death, and were aſſured their maſter had trodden that irremeable path, they might naturally conclude, that what he had ſaid to them about " leaving the world and going to his Father" was accompliſhed in his death; and conſiſtently with that notion might imagine that, by his coming to them again, no more was intended, than his appearing to them in the ſame manner as many perſons have been thought and ſaid to appear after their deceaſe. To guard againſt this double error, which Chriſt, to whom the thoughts of all hearts are open, perceived in the minds of his diſciples, he plainly intimates to them in the words, " I am not yet aſcended to my Father, but——I do " (or ſhall) aſcend to my Father," that his dying, and his final leaving of the world were diſtinct things, the latter of which was ſtill to come, though the former was paſt: he had indeed died like other mortals, and had, like them, left the world for a ſeaſon, as he himſelf had often foretold them ſhould come to paſs; but he was now riſen from the dead, returned into the world, and ſhould not leave it finally till he aſcended to his Father. Of his being returned into the world, his appearing to Mary Magdalene was doubtleſs intended for a proof; and yet of this it could be no proof at all, if what ſhe ſaw was no more than what is commonly called a ſpirit; ſince the ſpirits of many people have been thought to appear after their deceaſe, who notwithſtanding are ſuppoſed to have as effectually left this world by their death, as thoſe who have never appeared at all. Lazarus, like Chriſt, had died, and was by his quickening word recalled to life, which conſiſts in the animation of the body by its union with the ſoul. Now had Chriſt called up nothing but the ſpirit of Lazarus, and left his body to putrify and periſh in the grave, would not Lazarus, I aſk, have ſtill been reputed dead, and conſequently conſidered as out of this world, though his ſpirit had appeared to a thouſand different people? If Chriſt therefore was riſen from the dead, as the angels affirmed he was; if he had not yet finally left the world, as the words, " I am not yet " aſcended to my Father," plainly import; and if his appearing to Mary Magdalene was intended for a proof of thoſe two points, as undoubtedly it was; it will follow that he was really, that is, bodily, riſen from the dead: that he was ſtill in the world in the ſame manner, as when he " came forth from the Father, and came into the " world;" and that it was he himſelf, and not a ſpirit without fleſh and bones, that appeared to Mary Magdalene.

Before I conclude this argument, I muſt beg leave to make one obſervation more upon the term " aſcend," twice uſed by our Saviour in the compaſs of theſe few words. In the diſcourſe here alluded to by Chriſt, he told his diſciples that he ſhould go to his Father, and he now bids Mary Magdalene tell them that he ſhould aſcend to his Father;

Father; a variation in the phraſe; which I am perſuaded had its particular meaning, and that not very difficult to be diſcovered. For as by the former expreſſion he intended, as we have ſeen, to ſignify in general his final departure out of this world, ſo by the latter is the particular manner of that departure intimated; and doubtleſs with a view of letting his diſciples know the preciſe time, after which they ſhould no longer expect to ſee and converſe with him upon earth, but wait for the coming of that Comforter, which he promiſed to ſend them in his room, and who, unleſs he departed from them, was not to come. Jeſus made frequent viſits to his diſciples after his paſſion *, "being ſeen of them," ſays St. Luke, "forty days, and ſpeaking of "the things pretaining to the kingdom of God." Between ſome of theſe viſits were pretty long intervals †, during which he ſeems to have diſappeared, i. e. not to have reſided upon earth. Had Chriſt therefore left his diſciples without any mark or token, by which they might be able to diſtinguiſh his final departure from thoſe that were only temporary, they would probably have taken each viſit for the laſt; or have lingered after his final departure, in a fruitleſs expectation of ſeeing him again; either of which ſtates of uncertainty, and eſpecially the laſt, were liable to many inconveniencies, to doubts and jealouſies, and fears, which it was goodneſs, as well as wiſdom in our Saviour to prevent. Nor was the preventing theſe evils the only advantage that flowed from this early intimation of the manner of Chriſt's final departure out of this world, implied in the words, "I aſcend "to my Father," and verified in his aſcenſion into heaven. For as this could not have been effected without the power of God co-operating with him, ſo neither could it have been fore-known by him, without the communication of that ſpirit which only knows the counſels of God. When the diſciples therefore beheld their maſter ‡ "taken up into heaven, and received out of their ſight by a cloud of "glory," they could not but know aſſuredly that this was the event foretold about forty days before to Mary Magdalene; and knowing that could no longer doubt whether it was Chriſt himſelf who appeared and ſpoke thoſe prophetic words to her; how little credit ſoever they had given to her, when ſhe firſt told them ſhe "had ſeen the "Lord."

And thus, (as I have endeavoured to make appear) in theſe comprehenſive words of Chriſt ſpoken to Mary Magdalene, "touch me "not, for I am not yet aſcended to my Father; but go to my bre-"thren, and ſay to them, I aſcend to my Father." are implied three particulars. 1ſt, A renewal of the ſeveral promiſes made by him to his diſciples, the night in which he was betrayed; one of which was the promiſe of coming to them again before his final departure out of this world. Of his intention to perform which promiſe, I take his forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch or embrace him, to be an earneſt or token. 2dly, An intimation, that as his death and his final departure out of this world were two diſtinct things, the latter of which

* Acts, ch. i. and iii. † See John xx. 27. ‡ Acts, ch. i. ver. 9. See Whitby on this place.

was

was yet to come; ſo by his riſing from the dead, they were to underſtand his returning and being in the world, in the ſame manner with thoſe who have not yet quitted the world by death; and conſequently that he was really, that is bodily, riſen from the dead, of which his appearing to Mary Magdalene, and ſaying thoſe words, was an undoubted evidence. And, 3dly, a prophetical account of the manner of his departing finally out of the world, viz. by aſcending into heaven. From which ſeveral particulars it was impoſſible, as I ſaid before, for the diſciples to draw any other concluſion than that it was Chriſt himſelf who appeared and ſpoke to Mary Magdalene. I do not ſay the diſciples muſt neceſſarily have perceived, at the very firſt hearing theſe words, the ſeveral inferences which I have drawn from them; but when they came to conſider them attentively, to reflect upon what their Maſter had ſaid to them the night in which he was betrayed (to which thoſe words evidently referred), and when, after having handled his feet and hands, they were by their own ſenſes convinced that he was bodily riſen from the dead; and, laſtly, when they had ſeen thoſe words, "I aſcend to "my Father," verified in his aſcending into heaven before their eyes; then, I think, they could hardly avoid perceiving the ſeveral inferences, and drawing from them the concluſion above mentioned. For if it was not Chriſt, who appeared to Mary Magdalene, it muſt have been either ſome ſpirit good or bad; or ſome man, who, to impoſe upon her, counterfeited the perſon and voice of Chriſt; or, laſtly, the whole muſt have been forged and invented by her. The firſt of theſe ſuppoſitions is blaſphemous; the ſecond abſurd; and the third improbable. For, allowing her to have been capable of making a lye, for the carrying on an impoſture from which ſhe could reap no benefit, and to have been informed of what our Saviour had ſpoken to his diſciples the night in which he was betrayed, which does not appear, it muſt have been either extreme madneſs or folly in her to put the credit of her tale upon events, ſuch as the appearing of Chriſt to his diſciples, and his aſcending into heaven, which were ſo far from being in the number of contingencies, that they were not even within the powers and operations of what are called natural cauſes.

The ſame anſwer may be made to the ſuppoſition, that the appearance of Chriſt to the other Mary and Salome was likewiſe a forgery of thoſe women; and with this I ſhall conclude the ſecond head.

§ 15. 3dly, Of the many appearances of Chriſt to his diſciples, for the forty days after his paſſion the ſacred writers have mentioned particularly but very few; imagining, doubtleſs, thoſe few ſufficient to prove that fundamental article of the Chriſtian faith, and reſurrection of Jeſus. And, indeed, whoever attends to the nature and variety of the evidence contained even in thoſe few particulars which they have tranſmitted to us, cannot, I think, but acknowledge that thoſe, who were appointed to be the witneſſes of the reſurrection, had every kind of proof, that in the like circumſtance either the moſt ſcrupulous could demand, or the moſt incredulous imagine. This I doubt

not but to be able to make appear in the courſe of the following obſervations; in which I ſhall confine myſelf to the examination of thoſe appearances only, whoſe circumſtances the evangelical hiſtorians have thought proper to record, and upon which the faith of the Apoſtles was principally eſtabliſhed.

The firſt of theſe, though but barely mentioned by * St. Mark, is very particularly related by † St. Luke, in the following words; "and behold two of them went the ſame day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jeruſalem about threeſcore furlongs; and "they talked together of all theſe things which had happened; and it "came to paſs, that while they communed together, and reaſoned, "Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with them: but their eyes were "holden that they ſhould not know him. And he ſaid unto them, "'What manner of communications are theſe, that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are ſad?' And one of them, whoſe name was "Cleopas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, 'Art thou only a ſtranger in Je"ruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are to come to paſs "there in theſe days?' And he ſaid unto them, 'What things?' And "they ſaid unto him, 'Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, which was a "prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people; "and how the chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be con"demned to death, and have crucified him. But we truſted that it "had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and beſide all this, "to-day is the third day ſince theſe things were done. Yea, and "certain women alſo of our company made us aſtoniſhed, which "were early at the ſepulchre; and when they found not his body, "they came, ſaying, that they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels, which "ſaid that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, "went to the ſepulchre, and found it even ſo as the women had ſaid: "but him they ſaw not.' Then he ſaid unto them, 'O fools, and ſlow "of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken!' Ought not "Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?' "And beginning at Moſes and all the prophets, he expounded unto "them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf. And they "drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as "though he would have gone farther. But they conſtrained him, "ſaying, 'Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far "ſpent.' And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to paſs "as he ſat at meat with them, he took bread and bleſſed it, and brake "and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew "him; and he vaniſhed out of their ſight. And they ſaid one to another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by "the way,' and while he opened to us the ſcriptures? And they roſe "up the ſame hour, and returned to Jeruſalem, and found the eleven "gathered together, and them that were with them, ſaying, 'The Lord "is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' And they told what "things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in "breaking of bread."

* Ch. xvi. † Ch. xxiv.

Two-

Two objections have been made to the credibility of this fact: 1ſt, That theſe diſciples knew not Jeſus during the whole time of his walking, converſing, and ſitting at meat with them: 2dly, That when, upon his breaking bread, &c. their eyes were opened, and they are ſaid to have known him, he vaniſhed ſo ſuddenly out of their ſight, that they ſeem not to have had time enough to ſatisfy thoſe doubts, which muſt have ariſen from their having converſed with him ſo long without knowing him. To the firſt of theſe objections the evangeliſt himſelf furniſhes us with an anſwer, telling us, that "their eyes were holden that they ſhould not know him;" which, as it will not be pretended to be above the operation of him, whom the apoſtle of the Gentiles ſtyles "the power of God *;" ſo have I already ſhewed it to be a proceeding not unworthy of him, whom the ſame inſpired writer, in the ſame place, calls alſo "the "wiſdom of God." He threw a miſt before their corporeal eyes, that he might, by the pure and unprejudiced light of reaſon only, remove from before their internal ſight that ſtrong deluſion, which held their underſtanding from knowing the true import of thoſe types and prophecies, by which his ſufferings, death, and reſurrection were foreſhewn. He diſguiſed himſelf, but laid open the Scriptures; which till then had "appeared to them in another form;" and having by an expoſition of Moſes and the prophets, which made "their "hearts burn within them," ſtript off thoſe veils and colours which the worldly and carnal-minded Scribes and Phariſees had laid over them, and ſet them before their eyes in their genuine ſhape and luſtre, he in the next place diſcloſed himſelf, and left them convinced, as well from the Scriptures as from their ſenſes, that he was riſen from the dead. Which leads me to conſider the 2d objection, founded on his vaniſhing out of their ſight ſo ſoon after his diſcovering himſelf to them.

And here I ſhall obſerve, 1ſt, That it appears they had no doubt but that the perſon, who joined them in the way to Emmaus, and opened the Scriptures to them, was the ſame, whom, upon his breaking of bread, &c. they took to be Jeſus. 2dly, That upon their taking him to be Jeſus, they muſt have been ſenſible of ſome alteration, either in themſelves or in him, by which they were enabled to diſcover the miſtake they were under while they knew him not. 3dly, That alteration muſt to them have appeared ſupernatural and miraculous, as it is implied to have been in this phraſe, "their eyes "were opened and they knew him," as muſt alſo his vaniſhing (or diſappearing) from their ſight. And as from theſe particulars it could not but be evident to them, that the perſon, whom, when "their eyes were opened," they, from his countenanc, &c. knew to be Jeſus, was endowed with powers more than human; ſo was it impoſſible for them to conclude it to be any other than Jeſus himſelf, without blaſphemouſly ſuppoſing that God would permit any ſpirit, either good or bad, to aſſume the perſon of his beloved Son, with a view of countenancing and carrying on a falſhood and impoſture;

* Vide ſup.

eſpecially as, in the converſation he had held with them by the way, he had opened the Scriptures, and had ſhewn them from Moſes and all the prophets, that Chriſt was to ſuffer and die, and riſe again from the dead. But, beſides the clearing up all their doubts, ariſing from his ſufferings and death, which had ſtaggered their faith in him, whom till then "they truſted to be him who ſhould redeem "Iſrael," it is very probable, from what they ſay about "their "hearts burning within them, while he opened to them the Scrip-"tures," that they perceived, either in his manner or his doctrine, ſome lively marks and characters of that dignity and authority which was wont to diſtinguiſh him ſo much from the ordinary teachers of Iſrael, the Scribes and Phariſees. And, not to repeat what I have ſaid before, about the probability of Chriſt's having upon this occaſion made uſe of ſome geſture or phraſe peculiar to himſelf, in breaking and bleſſing the bread, I ſhall only add one remark from Grotius *, viz. that ſince it was the cuſtom among the Jews for the maſter of the feaſt, or the moſt honourable gueſt, immediately after bleſſing the cup, to take the bread, give thanks over it, break it, and, after eating a bit of it, to diſtribute it round the table, Chriſt by this action declared himſelf ſomething more than what thoſe diſciples had hitherto taken him for, a ſtranger and traveller whom they had picked up by the way, and "conſtrained to abide" with them; and by that declaration awakened their attention to that diſcovery of himſelf, which followed immediately upon it; and to which this ſolemn and religious act was certainly no improper introduction. The inference that is naturally deducible from theſe ſeveral obſervations is, that theſe two diſciples, even upon the ſuppoſition that Chriſt diſappeared, immediately after their eyes were opened, and they knew him, had ſufficient reaſon to be aſſured that it was he himſelf, who had walked, converſed, and ſitten at meat with them; and conſequently that he was riſen from the dead, according to what the angels had told the women, who had been that morning at the ſepulchre.

§ 16. The next appearance of Chriſt, that I ſhall take notice of, and that to which all thoſe before mentioned were preparatory, was to the eleven, and thoſe with them, on the evening of the ſame day. This appearance is mentioned by three of the evangeliſts, one relating one particular, and another another; out of each of whoſe goſpels I ſhall therefore take ſuch circumſtances as are not related by the others, and putting the ſcattered parts together compoſe from all of them one entire relation.

"Then the ſame day †" (viz. the day of the reſurrection) "at "evening, being the firſt day of the week, when the doors were ſhut, "where the diſciples were aſſembled for fear of the Jews, ‡ while "they ſat at meat" [immediately after the two diſciples from Emmaus had finiſhed their relation], "came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt, "and ſaith unto them, 'Peace be with you.' § But they were terri-

* In locum. See alſo Drufius, ibid.
† John xx. 19. ‡ Mark xvi. 14.
§ Luke xxiv. 36.

"fied

" fied and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit.
" * And he (upbraiding them with their unbelief and hardneſs of
" heart, becauſe they believed not them, who had ſeen him after
" he was riſen) ſaid to them, † ' Why are you troubled, and why
" do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet,
" that it is I myſelf: handle me and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh
" and bones, as ye ſee me have.' And when he had thus ſpoken,
" he ſhewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet be-
" lieved not for joy, and wondered, he ſaid unto them, ' Have ye
" here any meat?' And they gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh,
" and of an honey-comb; and he took it; and did eat before
" them. ‡ Then were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.
" § And he ſaid to them, ' Theſe are the words which I ſpake unto
" you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled
" which were written in the law of Moſes, and in the Prophets,
" and in the Pſalms, concerning me.' Then ‖ (breathing on them,
" and ſaying, ' Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt)' opened he their under-
" ſtandings, that they might underſtand the Scriptures; and ſaid to
" them, ' Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer;
" and to riſe from the dead the third day.—And ye are witneſſes of
" theſe things."

To this I ſhall add the appearance of Chriſt to St. Thomas, that I may bring all the proofs of the reſurrection under one view.

" But Thomas **, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not
" with them when Jeſus came. The other diſciples therefore ſaid to
" him, ' We have ſeen the Lord:' but he ſaid to them, ' Except I ſhall
" ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the
" print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not
" believe.' And, after eight days, again his diſciples were within,
" and Thomas with them; then came Jeſus, the doors being ſhut,
" and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, ' Peace be unto you.' Then ſaid
" he to Thomas, ' Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and
" reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide; and be not faith-
" leſs, but believing.' And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him,
" ' My Lord, and my God!' Jeſus ſaith unto him, ' Thomas, becauſe
" thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: bleſſed are they that have
" not ſeen, and yet have believed.'"

The proofs of Chriſt's being riſen from the dead, here exhibited to the diſciples, as ſet forth in the above-cited paſſages, may be comprized under four heads. 1ſt, The teſtimony of thoſe " who had
" ſeen him after he was riſen." 2dly, The evidences of their own ſenſes. 3dly, The exact accompliſhment of the " words which he
" had ſpoken to them, while he was yet with them." And, 4thly, The " fulfilling of all the things which were written in the law of
" Moſes, and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms, concerning him." The concluſiveneſs of all which proofs I ſhall endeavour to ſhew in ſome obſervations upon each of them. Upon the firſt I have no-

* Mark xvi. 14. † Luke xxiv. 38. ‡ John xx. 20. § Luke xxiv. 44.
‖ John xx. 22. ** Ibid. xx. 24.

thing to add to what I have written already under the second general head *, and the beginning of this, excepting that our Lord, by "upbraiding his disciples for not believing those who had seen "him after he had risen," took from them all possibility of doubting afterwards of the truth and reality of those appearances, thus confirmed and verified by his own irrefragable testimony. Under the words, "those who had seen him after he was risen," is comprehended likewise his appearance to Simon, mentioned both by St. Luke † and St. Paul ‡, as also that to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Upon the second head (viz. the evidence of their own senses), it might, one would imagine, be thought sufficient to observe, that the disciples had the same § infallible proofs (as the author of the Acts calls them) of Christ's being alive after his passion, as they had ever had of his being alive before it. They saw him, saw the particular marks of identity in his person and countenance, in his hands, feet, and side, which had been pierced at his crucifixion; and one of them, who had refused to believe "except he put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his "hands into his side," had that farther satisfaction, unreasonable as it was, granted him; they saw him also eat, what they themselves gave him, "a piece of a broiled fish and an honey-comb;" they heard him speak, and were by him commanded to "handle him," and see that he had flesh and bones; a command ‖ which, doubtless, they obeyed. And yet all these infallible tokens, or proofs, these Τεκμήρια, *certa & indubitata signa*, have been set aside by some pretended philosophers and philosophizing divines, upon no better grounds than their own vain inferences from these words of St. John, "Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in "the midst:" for taking it for granted, what as philosophers it better became them to have proved, that it is suggested in these words that Jesus passed through the walls, or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during his so passing; and having discovered, "that for one solid or material body to pass through another solid "or material body, without injuring the form of either, both the "passive and passing body remaining the same, is contrary to all "the laws of nature;" they have concluded, that the body of Christ was not real, i. e. a material body, and consequently was incapable of being felt by St. Thomas, &c. From whence it will follow, that the whole story is absurd and false.

In answer to this, I deny that the words, "Jesus came, the doors "being shut, and stood in the midst," imply that "Jesus passed

* See the 2d Head, Of the Appearance of Christ to the Women; and the 3d, Of his Appearance to the two Disciples on the way to Emmaus.

† Chap. xxiv. 34. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

§ Acts i. 3 ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις by many certain and undoubted proofs or tokens: Quintilian from Aristotle says, Τεκμήρια are *indubitata & certissima signa*, as the actions of speaking, walking, eating, and drinking are the Τεκμήρια [undoubted signs] of life.

‖ The words, "as ye see me have," strongly imply, that they had received the satisfaction offered them by feeling his hands and feet.

"through

" through the walls or doors, while they remained ſhut, without " either ſuffering in his own body, or cauſing in them any change " during his ſo paſſing." They ſeem, indeed, to imply, that he came in miraculouſly, though not by a miracle that contains a contradiction or impoſſibility; and I am perſuaded that, had not St. John intended to ſignify that he came in miraculouſly, he would not twice have mentioned that otherwiſe trifling circumſtance of " the " doors being ſhut." But though a denial without proof be a proper and ſufficient anſwer to an aſſertion without proof, yet I ſhall give ſome reaſons why the interpretation contended for by theſe philoſophers cannot be the true one. 1ſt, It is not to be preſumed, that St John, who with the other diſciples had received ſenſible evidence of the reality, i. e. the materiality of Chriſt's body, ſhould be abſurd enough to imagine, at the ſame time, that it was a ſpiritual body; which he muſt have done, had he thought that Jeſus paſſed through the walls or doors, while they remained ſhut, without either ſuffering in his own body, or cauſing in them any change, during his ſo paſſing; it requiring no great depth of philoſophy to underſtand it to be impoſſible, even to omnipotence, to cauſe the body of man to penetrate through a wall or door, without cauſing ſome change or alteration in the one or the other. Neither (2dly,) is it to be preſumed, that St. John, intending, as it is plain he did, by relating the ſtory of St. Thomas, to acquaint the world, that he [Thomas], as well as the other diſciples, had, by feeling and examining his Maſter's body, ſenſible evidence of his being really, i. e. bodily, riſen from the dead, ſhould be weak enough to inſert in his relation a circumſtance which tended to prove that the body, which St. Thomas is ſuppoſed to have felt, was not a material but a ſpiritual body, and conſequently incapable of being felt and handled. Contradictions and abſurdities are not be preſumed in any writer. On the contrary, as it is ſuppoſed that every man in his ſenſes has ſome meaning in what he ſpeaks or writes, ſo by that meaning only (which is beſt collected from the drift and tenor of the whole diſcourſe) is the ſenſe of any ambiguous word or ſentence in it to be determined; and every interpretation of ſuch ambiguous word or ſentence, as can be ſhewn to be inconſiſtent with the plain meaning of the ſpeaker or writer, is, for that reaſon, to be rejected. This juſtice, candour, and common ſenſe, require. 3dly, By the way of reaſoning made uſe of upon this occaſion by theſe free-reaſoning philoſophers, the ſpirituality of the walls, or doors, may as well be inferred as the ſpirituality of Chriſt's body; for Chriſt's body being proved to be material, by being handled by his diſciples, &c. and it being admitted that he penetrated through the walls or doors, while they remained ſhut, without ſuffering, &c. it will follow that the walls or doors had ſpiritual bodies; ſince it is contrary to the law of nature that one ſolid or material body ſhould paſs, &c. An argument which would have very well become the philoſophical anſwer to the " Trial of the witneſſes," as being ſophiſtical, ludicrous, and abſurd.

Having now given my reaſons for rejecting, as falſe, the interpretation abovementioned, which ſome have endeavoured to fix upon theſe words of St. John, "Jeſus came, the doors being ſhut, "and ſtood in the midſt;" and having alſo allowed, that thoſe words naturally ſuggeſt the entrance of our Saviour to have been miraculous; I ſhall in the next place attempt to ſhew that the miracle here wrought by Jeſus, inſtead of awakening in the minds of the diſciples any ſuſpicion, that their ſenſes might have been impoſed upon, in the examination they took of their Lord's body, becauſe it is as eaſy for a power, that can controul the law of nature, to excite in us the ideas of hearing, ſeeing, and feeling, without the real exiſtence of any object of thoſe ſenſations, as to open a paſſage for a human body through walls or doors, without making any viſible breach in them; this miracle, I ſay, inſtead of raiſing any ſuch ſuſpicion in the diſciples, tended on the contrary to remove all their doubts, and convince them effectually, that it was Jeſus himſelf in a body conſiſting of fleſh and bones, and not a ſpirit, which appeared to them.

The diſciples, during their converſation with Chriſt before his paſſion, had been accuſtomed to ſee him work miracles of various kinds, caſt out devils, heal all manner of diſeaſes, give light to the blind, elocution to the dumb, legs and nerves to the lame and paralytic, and life to the dead; and all this by a word, which they had alſo ſeen even the winds and ſeas obey. From this extenſive power of controuling the laws of nature, eſtabliſhed by the great Creator himſelf, joined to the more than human purity of his life and doctrine, the diſciples moſt rationally concluded that he "came forth "from God." And, therefore, as on the one hand, the power of working miracles was a characteriſtical mark of Jeſus, and conſequently his working miracles after his reſurrection was one evidence of the identity of his perſon; ſo, on the other hand, was the aſſurance of his coming "forth from the God of truth," founded upon his doing ſuch works, "as no man could do, unleſs God was "with him," an infallible ſecurity to the diſciples againſt the ſuſpicion of his intending to impoſe upon them. From whence it will follow, that when, upon their fancying they ſaw a ſpirit, he aſſured them it was he himſelf, and no ſpirit," which (ſays he) "hath not fleſh and bones, as" they, by feeling and handling him, "ſaw he had," they could have no ſhadow of a pretence either for diſbelieving his word, or diſtruſting their own ſenſes. For, in reality, doth not his appealing to their ſenſes for a confirmation of what he aſſerted (viz. that it was he himſelf, and not a ſpirit), imply an affirmation that their ſenſes were the proper judges of the point in queſtion, and that he therefore left the determination of it to them? And are not both the parts of this affirmation abſolutely falſe, if it be ſuppoſed that the body here aſſumed by Chriſt was a ſpiritual, i. e. an immaterial body? And if, inſtead of the object upon which they were to judge (viz. a material body, capable of exciting ſuch and ſuch ſenſations), a very different thing was ſubſtituted,

ſtituted, namely, a mere idea of ſuch an object, occaſioned by the illuſory and ſuborned evidence of ſenſations imprinted on their minds by a miraculous power; would not, I ſay, an appeal to the judgement of their ſenſes in this caſe have been a mockery? And would not the impoſing upon their ſenſes, after ſuch an appeal, have been fraudulent and diſhoneſt? And would not ſuch a proceeding have been abſurd as well as diſhoneſt? For, if it be allowed that Jeſus had the power of impoſing miraculouſly upon the ſenſes of his diſciples, it will not ſurely be denied that he had the power of entering miraculouſly into the chamber, where they were aſſembled, while "the doors were ſhut." The latter of theſe two miracles renders the firſt unneceſſary. For if Jeſus could in his human body enter into the chamber, while the doors were ſhut, there was no occaſion for him to impoſe upon the ſenſes of his diſciples. And if he had it in his option to work whichever of thoſe miracles he pleaſed, would it not have been abſurd (with reverence be it ſpoken) in him to chuſe that which was inconſiſtent with the character of one who "came forth from the God of truth," and directly oppoſite to the deſign of his appearing to his diſciples after his paſſion; which was, by offering his body to the examination of their ſenſes, to convince them that he was really, i. e. bodily, riſen from the dead?

The diſciples, therefore, who by the mighty ſigns and wonders done by him before his paſſion were convinced that God was with him, could not, upon this occaſion, but draw the ſame concluſion from his entering miraculouſly into the room while the doors were ſhut, and as miraculouſly perceiving the ſecret doubts and reaſonings of their hearts; and though, not underſtanding what was meant by riſing from the dead, they had at firſt ſuſpected him to be a ſpirit; yet, having been ſatisfied of the contrary by handling his body, they had no more reaſon to diſtruſt the evidence of their ſenſes, than they had formerly, when after having ſeen him "walk "upon the waves *," and having from thence fallen into the like imagination of his being a ſpirit, they had been convinced of their miſtake by the ſame kind of proof, viz. by ſeeing, hearing, and feeling him, eating and converſing with him in the ſame manner as with other men. And, indeed, there is no intimation in the ſacred writers of their having had, upon either of theſe occaſions, any ſuſpicion of fraud or impoſture. They were ſimple, plain men, ſtrangers to vain and viſionary ſpeculations; and went upon thoſe grounds, upon which all men *act*, however ſome may *talk*, who have reaſoned themſelves out of all the principles of reaſon. Having therefore throughout all their paſt lives truſted to the information of their ſenſes, they could not avoid believing them upon the preſent occaſion, eſpecially when they were commanded to believe them by one whoſe tranſcendent knowledge and power manifeſted him to have a thorough inſight into the frame of man, as well as a ſupreme authority over the laws of nature.

* Matth. xiv.

§ 17. 3dly, The exact accompliſhment of the words, in which our Saviour foretold to his diſciples his ſufferings, death, and reſurrection, will evidently appear by comparing the words of thoſe prophecies with the ſeveral circumſtances of thoſe events. And, therefore, to enable the reader to make this compariſon with the greater eaſe, I ſhall firſt ſet down the ſeveral particulars of the paſſion, and death, &c. of Chriſt, and then produce the prophecies correſponding to them.

The ſufferings of Jeſus, properly ſo called, took their beginning from the treachery of * Judas, "one of the twelve, who" (as it is related by the evangeliſts) "having received a band of ſoldiers, "&c. from the chief prieſts," with whom he had bargained "for "thirty pieces of ſilver" to deliver him up, "went with them to "a garden, whither he knew Chriſt was accuſtomed to reſort," and there by the ſign agreed on ("a kiſs") having pointed him out, put him into their hands, who ſeizing on him immediately, "carried "him before the high prieſt, &c."

This fact was ſeveral times foretold by Jeſus; at firſt more obſcurely, as in theſe words, "Have not I choſen you twelve, and "one of you is a devil †," Διάβολος, an informer; and in theſe, "The Son of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men ‡;" and in others of the ſame general import; then more plainly at the laſt ſupper, to his diſciples, who, upon his ſaying, "Verily I ſay unto "you, that one of you ſhall betray me, were exceeding ſorrowful, "and began every one of them to ſay unto him, Lord, Is it I §?" In anſwer to which he ſaid, "He that dippeth his hand with me in "the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me." Theſe words, as Grotius ‖ obſerves, muſt be taken to come ſomewhat nearer to a declaration of the perſon who was to betray Jeſus, than thoſe others, "one of "you ſhall betray me:" "Wherefore," adds that learned commentator, "I am perſuaded that Judas ſat near to Chriſt, ſo as to "eat out of the ſame diſh or meſs with him, there being ſeveral "diſhes or meſſes on the table." This conjecture is indeed very probable, and gives great light to this whole matter: upon which we may obſerve ſtill farther, that as the diſciples, even after this declaration, were ſtill in doubt of whom he ſpake, it is evident there muſt have been others beſides Judas, who "dipped their hands in the "ſame diſh with Jeſus **," otherwiſe that deſcription had ſufficiently made him known, and there had been no occaſion for Simon Peter to have "beckoned to that diſciple, who was learning on the "boſom of Jeſus," that he ſhould aſk him of whom he ſpoke? In compliance therefore with this demand made to him by St. John in the name of all his diſciples, and to put an end at once to all their doubts, Jeſus told them he would point out the very perſon to them, ſaying, "it is he, to whom I ſhall give a ſop when I have dipped it;

* Matth. xxvi. Mark xiv. Luke xxii. John xxiii. † John vi. 70.
‡ Matth. xvii. 22. § Ibid. xxvi. 21. Mark xiv. 18. Luke xxii. 21.
‖ See Grot. in loc. ** John xiii. 22.

"and

" and when he had dipped the ſop, he gave it to Judas Iſcariot the " ſon of Simon;" who appearing ſurprized at being thus pronounced a traitor, either for his farther ſatisfaction, or to diſſemble the wickedneſs of his heart, himſelf aſked Jeſus, if it was he: to whom Jeſus anſwered, " Thou ſayeſt." " And thus" (concludes Grotius) " Chriſt gave proofs of his fore-knowledge by degrees; " firſt including the future traitor in the number of the twelve; " then in the leſſer number of thoſe who ſat next to him; and, " laſtly, by certain and preciſe marks pointing out the very perſon " himſelf." To which I muſt add, that, in order to imprint this prophecy ſtrongly on the minds of his diſciples, he introduced it with applying to himſelf a paſſage of the Pſalms, " * He that eateth " bread with me, hath lifted up his heel againſt me;" and with theſe remarkable words, " Now I tell you before it come, that when " it is come to paſs you may believe that I am he."

2. The next incident is the deſertion of the diſciples, who, as we learn both from St. Matthew † and St. Mark ‡, upon their maſter's being ſeized by the ſoldiers and ſervants of the chief prieſt, who came with Judas, " all immediately forſook him and fled."

Of this their deſertion Jeſus had forewarned them but a very ſhort time before it came to paſs, and that in the very pride and confidence of their faith upon their profeſſing to believe, that " he came forth " from God: § Then ſaith Jeſus to them, All ye ſhall be offended " becauſe of me this night," or (as it is in John) " ſhall be ſcat- " tered every man to his own home; for it is written, I will ſmite " the ſhepherd, and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad."

3. The third particular is Peter's diſowning Chriſt, recorded in all the evangeliſts; by whoſe accounts it appears, that Peter, following Chriſt at a diſtance to the palace of the high prieſt, was let into the court by the means of St. John, who " ſpake to her that " kept the door, and brought in Peter;" where ſtanding among the croud while his maſter was under examination, he was three ſeveral times charged by ſome that were about him with belonging to Chriſt, which he as often denied, affirming " with oaths and im- " precations," that he did not ſo much as know him; and immediately after his third denial the cock crew; " and then the Lord " turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word " of the Lord—and went out and wept bitterly ‖." The prophecy is as follows: " Verily I ſay to thee [Peter], this day, even this " night, before the cock crow twice thou ſhalt deny [or diſown] " me thrice **." Here we ſee the nature, the time, and the repetitions of Peter's offence preciſely defined and limited. And I take the ſuddenneſs and ſincerity of his return to his former faith in his maſter, implied in his " weeping bitterly" upon the recollection of his crime, and of his maſter's words, to be fore-ſignified in this paſſage of St. Luke ††, " And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, be- " hold Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as

* Pſal. xli. 9. † Matth. xxvi. 56. Mark xiv. 27. compared with John xvi. 32. ‡ Mark xiv. 50. § Matth. xxvi. 31. ‖ Luke xxii. 61. ** Mark xiv. 30. †† Ch. xxii. 31, 32.

" wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and " when thou art converted" [ἐπιστέψας, returned back again to the faith], " ſtrengthen thy brethren."

4. The fourth event foretold by Chriſt, is his being delivered to the high prieſts, and by them to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, together with many particulars of his ſufferings from that time to his crucifixion. All which things are related by the evangeliſts, as follows:

" And they that had laid hold on Jeſus, led him away to Caia- " phas the high prieſt *," where the Scribes and the elders were aſſembled; who, after having examined ſome witneſſes, from whoſe evidence nothing criminal could be made out againſt him, at length " adjured him by the living God to tell them, Whether he was " the Chriſt, the ſon of God." To him Jeſus ſaith, " Thou haſt " ſaid. Then the high prieſt rent his cloaths, ſaying, He hath " ſpoken blaſphemy, What farther need have we of witneſſes? Be- " hold, now you have heard his blaſphemy. What think ye? They " anſwered and ſaid, 'He is guilty of death.' Then did they ſpit " in his face, and buffeted him, and others ſmote him with the " palms of their hands, ſaying, Prophecy to us, thou Chriſt, who " is he that ſmote thee.

" And when they had bound him, they led him away to Pontius " Pilate, the (Roman) governor;" who, overcome by the clamours of a tumultuous multitude, at laſt delivered him to be crucified, after having declared him innocent five ſeveral times, and endeavoured in vain to prevail upon the Jews to let him go free, or to be contented with his having ſcourged him. " † Then the ſoldiers of the " governor took Jeſus into the common hall, and gathered to him " the whole band of ſoldiers; and they ſtripped him, and put on " him a ſcarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, " they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And " they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail " King of the Jews. And they ſpit upon him, and took the robe " off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away " to crucify him."

The words in which many of theſe particulars were foretold, are theſe. " ‡ Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and the ſon of man ſhall " be betrayed to the chief prieſts, and to the Scribes, and they ſhall " condemn him to death. And ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles " to mock, and to ſcourge, and to crucify him." In St. Mark § it is, " They [the Gentiles] ſhall mock him, and ſhall ſcourge him, " and ſhall ſpit upon him, and ſhall kill him." In St. Luke ‖, " For he ſhall be delivered to the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, " and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpit on, and they ſhall ſcourge him " and put him to death." Of his ſufferings from the elders and chief prieſts he ſpoke in theſe words: " ** From that time forth " began Jeſus to ſhew to the diſciples how he muſt go to Jeruſalem, " and ſuffer many things of the elders and chief prieſts, and Scribes, " and be killed, &c."

* Matth. xxvi. 57. Mark xiv. 53. † Matth. xxvii. 20. ‡ Ibid. xx. 18.
§ Ch. ix. 34. ‖ Ch. xviii. 32. ** Matth. xvi. 20.

5. His

5. His crucifixion and death are mentioned in every one of the laſt cited paſſages, and in many others up and down the evangeliſts, either in expreſs words, or in figures and alluſions, which I think it is not neceſſary to inſert, no more than the relation of thoſe events, which are too well known to be diſputed.

One proof, however, of his death I ſhall here beg leave to mention, becauſe it has not been much attended to by common readers. St. John, chap. xix. 33, 34, after having related that the ſoldiers "brake the legs of the two thieves," who were crucified with Jeſus, adds, "But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead "already, they brake not his legs; but one of the ſoldiers with a "ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith came thereout blood and "water; and he that ſaw it, bare record, &c." Upon theſe words Beza makes the following obſervation. Among the reaſons that induced St. John to aſſert this fact with ſo much emphaſis, this ought not to be paſſed over, which Eraſmus alſo touches upon; namely, that by this wound the death of Chriſt is fully proved. For the water, flowing out of that wound in the ſide, was an indication of the ſpear's having penetrated the *pericardium*, in which that water is lodged, and which being wounded, every animal muſt neceſſarily die immediately. This fact, therefore, was inſerted to obviate the calumnies of the enemies of the truth, who might otherwiſe pretend that Jeſus was taken down from the croſs before he was dead, and thence call in queſtion the reality of his reſurrection from the dead.

6. Of his riſing from the dead I need not here again produce the proofs, having ſet them forth ſo copiouſly in all the preceding parts of this diſcourſe; but concerning the evidence of his riſing preciſely on "the third day," I think it proper here to add an obſervation or two. That he did not riſe before the third day, is evident from what St. Matthew relates of the watch or guard being ſet at the door of the ſepulchre. The paſſage is this: "* Now the "next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief "prieſts and Phariſees came together to Pilate, ſaying, Sir, we re"member that that deceiver ſaid, whilſt he was yet alive, After "three days I will riſe again: command therefore that the ſepulchre "be made ſure" until the third day, "leſt his diſciples come by "night and ſteal him away, and ſay to the people, he is riſen from "the dead; ſo the laſt error ſhall be worſe than the firſt," &c. From theſe words I obſerve, 1ſt, That the watch or guard was ſet at the ſepulchre the next day after the death and burial of Chriſt; 2dly, It is moſt probable this was done on what we call the evening of that day; becauſe that was a high-day, not only a Sabbath, but the paſſover; and it can hardly be imagined that the chief prieſt, and eſpecially the Phariſees who pretended to greater ſtrictneſs and purity than any other ſect of the Jews, ſhould, before the religious duties of the day were over, defile themſelves by going to Pilate; for that they were very ſcrupulous upon that point appears from what St. John † ſays of their not entering into the hall of

* Chap. xxvii. 62. † Chap. xviii. 28.

judgement

judgement (the *prætorium*, where Pilate's tribunal was) the day before, "leſt they ſhould be defiled," and ſo kept from eating the paſſover. And if it ſhould be ſaid, that the paſchal lamb being always eaten in the night, all their ſcruples upon that account were over, and they at liberty to go to Pilate in the morning, or at what other time they pleaſed; I anſwer, that, allowing the objection, it is ſtill farther to be conſidered, that this was the Sabbath-day: and can it be ſuppoſed that the Phariſees, who cenſured Jeſus "for healing, and "his diſciples for plucking and eating the ears of corn on the Sab-"bath day," would profane that day, and defile themſelves, not only by going to Pilate, but with the ſoldiers to the ſepulchre of Chriſt, and ſetting a ſeal upon the door of the ſepulchre, before the religious duties of that ſolemn day were paſt? eſpecially as they were under no kind of neceſſity of doing it before the evening; though it was highly expedient for them not to delay it beyond that time. Both which points I ſhall now explain.

Jeſus had ſaid, whilſt he was yet alive, that he ſhould riſe again from the dead on "the third day;" which prophecy would have been equally falſified by his riſing on the firſt, or ſecond, as on the fourth. If his body, therefore, was not in the ſepulchre "at the "cloſe of the ſecond day," the chief prieſts and Phariſees would gain their points, and might have aſſerted boldly, that he was an impoſtor; from whence it will follow, that it was time enough for them to viſit the ſepulchre at "the cloſe of the ſecond day" On the other hand, as he had declared he ſhould riſe on the "third day," it was neceſſary for them (if they apprehended what they gave out, that his diſciples would come and ſteal him away), to guard againſt any ſuch attempt on that day, and "for that day only." And, as the third day began from the evening or ſhutting-in of the ſecond, according to the way of computing uſed among the Jews, it was as neceſſary for them not to delay viſiting the ſepulchre, and ſetting their guard, till after the beginning of that third day; for if they had come to the ſepulchre, though ever ſo ſhort a time after the "third day "was begun," and had found the body miſſing, they could not from thence have proved him an impoſtor. And accordingly St. Matthew tells us they went thither on the "ſecond day," which was the Sabbath; and though the going to Pilate, and with the Roman ſoldiers, to the ſepulchre, and ſealing up the ſtone, was undoubtedly a profanation of the Sabbath, in the eyes of the ceremonious Phariſees, yet might they excuſe themſelves to their conſciences, or (what ſeems to have been of greater conſequence in their opinions) to the world, by pleading the neceſſity of doing it that day. And ſurely nothing could have carried them out on ſuch a buſineſs, on ſuch a day, but the urgent neceſſity of doing it "then," or "not "at all." And as I have ſhewn above, that this urgent neceſſity could not take place till the "cloſe of the ſecond day," and juſt, though but one moment, before the beginning of the third; it will follow, from what hath been ſaid, that in the eſtimation of the high prieſt and Phariſees, the day on which they ſet their guard was the ſecond day; and the next day conſequently was the third; to

the

the end of which they requeſted Pilate to command that the ſepulchre might be made ſure. Here then we have a proof, furniſhed by the murderers and blaſphemers of Chriſt themſelves, that he was not riſen before the third day; for it is to be taken for granted, that before they ſealed up the ſepulchre, and ſet the guard, they had inſpected it, and ſeen that the body was ſtill there. Hence alſo we are enabled to anſwer the unlearned cavils that have been raiſed upon theſe expreſſions, "three days and three nights," and "after "three days." For it is plain that the chief prieſts and Phariſees, by their going to the ſepulchre on the Sabbath-day, underſtood that day to be the ſecond; and it is as plain by their ſetting the guard from that time, and the reaſon given to Pilate for their ſo doing, viz. "leſt the diſciples ſhould come in the night, and ſteal him "away," that they conſtrued that day, which was juſt then beginning, to be the day limited by Chriſt for his riſing from the dead, i. e. the third day. For had they taken theſe words of our Saviour, "The ſon of man ſhall be three days and three nights in the heart of "the earth," in their ſtrict literal ſenſe, they need not have been in ſuch haſte to ſet their guard; ſince, according to that interpretation, there were yet two days and two nights to come; neither, for the ſame reaſon, had they any occaſion to apprehend ill conſequences from the diſciples coming that night and ſtealing away the body of their maſter. So that, unleſs it be ſuppoſed that the chief prieſts and Phatiſees, the moſt learned ſect among the Jews, did not underſtand the meaning of a phraſe in their own language; or that they were ſo impious or impolitic to profane the Sabbath and defile themſelves without any occaſion; and ſo ſenſeleſs and impertinent as to aſk a guard of Pilate for watching the ſepulchre that night and day, to prevent the diſciples ſtealing away the body of Chriſt the night or the day following; unleſs, I ſay, theſe ſtrange ſuppoſitions be admitted, we may fairly conclude, that in the language, and to the underſtanding of the Jews, "three days and three "nights, and after three days," were equivalent to "three days," or "in three days." That he roſe on the third day, the teſtimony of the angels, and his own appearances to the women, to Simon, and to the two diſciples on the way to Emmaus, which all happened on that day, are clear and ſufficient proofs.

The predictions of Chriſt, relating to this miraculous event, are many; ſome of which only I ſhall here ſet down, for brevity's ſake.

"* And as they" [the three diſciples] "came down from the "mountain" [where Chriſt had been transfigured] "Jeſus charged "them, ſaying, Tell the viſion to no man, until the Son of man be "riſen again from the dead.

"† But after I am riſen, I will go before you into Galilee."

"‡ From that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew ro his diſciples, "how that he muſt go to Jeruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the "elders and chief prieſts and Scribes, and be killed, and be raiſed "again the third day."

* Matth. xvii. 9. † Chap. xxvi. 32. ‡ Chap. xvi. 22.

"Behold

" * Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be " betrayed to the chief prieſts, and to the Scribes, and they ſhall " condemn him to death, and ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles, to " mock, and to ſcourge, and to crucify him, and the third day he " ſhall riſe again."

I ſhall defer what remarks I have to make upon theſe predictions, and their accompliſhment, till I come to conſider the prophecies contained in the writings of Moſes, and the Prophets, and the Pſalms, relating to the ſufferings, and death, and reſurrection of Chriſt; for thoſe only belong to the preſent ſubject.

§ 18. 4thly, The fourth evidence, appealed to by our Saviour, was the teſtimony of the Scriptures; in which are contained, not only the promiſes of a Meſſiah, and Saviour of the world, but the marks and deſcriptions by which he was to be known. Of theſe there are many, and thoſe ſo various, ſo ſeemingly incompatible in one and the ſame perſon, and exhibited under ſuch a multitude of types and figures, that as it was abſurd for a mere mortal to pretend to anſwer the character of the Meſſiah in all points, ſo was it difficult to thoſe, who by ſome expreſſions of the prophets were filled with the idea of a glorious, powerful, and triumphant deliverer, to underſtand the intimation given in others of his ſufferings and death. But this difficulty proceeds rather from the prejudices and blindneſs of the interpreters, than from any degree of obſcurity in the latter more than in the former. His ſufferings and death, and his offering himſelf up as a ſacrifice for ſin, are as plainly ſet forth in the writings of the prophets, and in the types of the Moſaical ceremonies, as his power and his prieſthood: and if the Jews, and even the diſciples, poſſeſſed with the like vain and carnal imaginations, turned their views and expectations to the one, and overlooked the other, it was owing to their miſtaking the nature of his kingdom, and the end and deſign of his prieſtly office. This, I doubt not, might be made appear by comparing the ſeveral types and prophecies together, but would carry me too far from my preſent purpoſe, which is only to ſhew, that the ſufferings, and death, and reſurrection of Chriſt, were foretold in the types and predictions contained in the books of Moſes, in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms; and to derive from thence another proof in favour of the reſurrection.

The firſt prophecy relating to this ſubject in the books of Moſes, and the firſt indeed that was ever given to man, is that recorded in the third chapter of Geneſis, and the 15th verſe, in theſe words, " And I will put enmity between thee" [the ſerpent] " and the wo- " man, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: it ſhall bruiſe thy head, " and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.

Upon this prophecy, I ſhall beg leave to quote a paſſage out of the late biſhop of Saliſbury's moſt admirable diſcourſes, " Of the Uſe " and Intent of Prophecy in the ſeveral Ages of the World," Diſc. III. p. 57.—" Let us conſider the hiſtory of Moſes, as we ſhould " do any other ancient Eaſtern hiſtory of the like antiquity: ſup-

* Matthr xx. 18, 19.

" poſe,

" poſe, for inſtance, that this account of the fall had been preſerved " to us out of Sanchoniatho's Phœnician hiſtory: we ſhould in that " caſe be at a loſs perhaps to account for every manner of repreſenta- " tion, for every figure and expreſſion in the ſtory; but we ſhould " ſoon agree that all theſe difficulties were imputable to the manner " and cuſtoms of his age and country; and ſhould ſhew more reſpect " to ſo venerable a piece of antiquity, than to charge it with want of " ſenſe, becauſe we did not underſtand every minute circumſtance; " we ſhould likewiſe agree, that there were evidently four perſons " concerned in the ſtory: the man, the woman, the perſon repre- " ſented by the ſerpent, and God. Diſagree we could not about their " ſeveral parts. The ſerpent is evidently the tempter; the man and " the woman are the offenders; God the judge of all three. The " puniſhments inflicted on the man and woman have no obſcurity " in them; and as to the ſerpent's ſentence, we ſhould think it " reaſonable to give it ſuch a ſenſe as the whole ſeries of the ſtory " requires.

" 'Tis no unreaſonable thing ſurely to demand the ſame equity " of you in interpreting the ſenſe of Moſes, as you would certainly " uſe towards any other antient writer. And if the ſame equity be " allowed, this plain fact undeniably ariſes from the hiſtory; that " man was tempted to diſobedience, and did diſobey, and forfeited " all title to happineſs, and to life itſelf: that God judged him and " the deceiver likewiſe under the form of a ſerpent. We require " no more; and will proceed upon this fact to conſider this prophecy " before us.

" The prophecy is part of the ſentence paſſed upon the deceiver: " the words are theſe. 'I will put enmity between thee and the wo- " man, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, " and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel;' Gen. iii. 15. Chriſtian writers " apply this to our bleſſed Saviour, emphatically ſtyled here the ſeed " of the woman, and who came in the fulneſs of time to bruiſe the " ſerpent's head, by deſtroying the works of the devil, and reſtoring " thoſe to the liberty of the ſons of God, who were held under the " bondage and captivity of ſin. You'll ſay, what unreaſonable liberty " of interpretation is this? Tell us by what rules of language the " ſeed of the woman is made to denote one particular perſon, and by " what art you diſcover the myſtery of Chriſt's miraculous concep- " tion and birth in this common expreſſion? Tell us likewiſe, how " bruiſing the ſerpent's head comes to ſignify the deſtroying the power " of ſin, and the redemption of mankind by Chriſt? 'Tis no wonder " to hear ſuch queſtions, from thoſe who look no farther than to the " third chapter of Geneſis, to ſee the ground of the Chriſtian appli- " cation. As the prophecy ſtands there, nothing appears to point " out this particular meaning; much leſs to confine this prophecy to " it. But of this hereafter. Let us for the preſent lay aſide all our " own notions, and go back to the ſtate and condition of things, as " they were at the time of the delivery of this prophecy; and ſee (if " haply we may diſcover it) what God intended to diſcover at that

" time by this prophecy, and what we may reaſonably ſuppoſe our " firſt parents underſtood it to mean.

" They were now in a ſtate of ſin, ſtanding before God to receive " ſentence for their diſobedience, and had reaſon to expect a full exe- " cution of the penalty threatened, ' in the day thou eateſt thereof thou " ſhalt ſurely die.' But God came in mercy as well as judgement, pur- " poſing not only to puniſh, but to reſtore man. The judgement is " afwul and ſevere; the woman is doom'd to ſorrow in conception; " the man to ſorrow and travail all the days of his life; the ground is " curſed for his ſake; and the end of the judgement is, ' duſt thou art, " and to duſt thou ſhalt return.' Had they been left thus, they might " have continued in their labour and ſorrow for their appointed time, " and at laſt returned to duſt, without any well-grounded hope or " confidence in God; they muſt have looked upon themſelves as re- " jected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and ſorrow in this " world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this foot, I " conceive, there could have been no religion left in the world; for " a ſenſe of religion, without hope, is a ſtate of phrenzy and diſtrac- " tion, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing " elſe that is praiſe worthy. If therefore God intended to preſerve " them as objects of mercy, it was abſolutely neceſſary to communi- " cate ſo much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for " their future endeavours to reconcile themſelves to him by a better " obedience. This ſeems to be the primary intention of this firſt " divine prophecy; and it was neceſſary to the ſtate of the world, and " the condition of religion, which could not poſſibly have been ſup- " ported without the communication of ſuch hopes. The prophecy " is excellently adapted to this purpoſe, and manifeſtly conveyed ſuch " hopes to our firſt parents. For let us conſider in what ſenſe we " may ſuppoſe them to underſtand this prophecy. Now they muſt " neceſſarily underſtand the prophecy, either according to the literal " meaning of the words; or according to ſuch meaning as the whole " circumſtance of the tranſaction, of which they are a part, does re- " quire. If we ſuppoſe them to underſtand the words literally, and " that God meant them ſo to be underſtood, this paſſage muſt appear " ridiculous. Do but imagine that you ſee God coming to judge the " offenders; Adam and Eve before him in the utmoſt diſtreſs; that " you hear God inflicting pains, and ſorrow, and miſery, and death " upon the firſt of human race; and that in the midſt of all this ſcene " of woe and great calamity, you hear God foretelling, with great " ſolemnity, a very trivial accident, that ſhould ſometimes happen in " the world: that ſerpents would be apt to bite men by the heels, and " that men would be apt to revenge themſelves by ſtriking them on " the head. What has this trifle to do with the loſs of mankind, " with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin " of all the glory and happineſs of the creation? Great comfort it was " to Adam, doubtleſs, after telling him that his days ſhould be ſhort " and full of miſery, and his end without hope, to let him know, " that he ſhould now and then knock a ſnake on the head, but not

" even

" even that, without paying dear for his poor victory, for the ſnake " ſhould often bite him by the heel. Adam, ſurely, could not un- " derſtand the prophecy in this ſenſe, though ſome of his ſons have " ſo underſtood it; a plain indication how much more ſome men are " concerned to maintain a literal interpretation of Scripture, than they " are to make it ſpeak common ſenſe. Leaving this therefore as ab- " ſolutely abſurd and ridiculous, let us conſider what meaning the " circumſtances of the tranſaction do neceſſarily fix to the words of " this prophecy. Adam tempted by his wife, and ſhe by the ſerpent, " had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the preſence of " God expecting judgement. They knew full well at this juncture, " that their fall was the victory of the ſerpent, whom by experience " they found to be an enemy to God and to man; to man, whom he " had ruined by ſeducing him to ſin; to God, the nobleſt work of " whoſe creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be ſome " comfort to them to hear the ſerpent firſt condemned, and to ſee " that, however he had prevailed againſt them, he had gained no vic- " tory over their Maker, who was able to aſſert his own honour, and " to puniſh this great author of iniquity. By this method of God's " proceeding they were ſecured from thinking that there was any evil " being equal to the creator in power and dominion. An opinion " which gained ground in after-times through the prevalency of evil; " and is, where it does prevail, deſtructive of all true religion. The " condemnation therefore of the ſerpent was the maintenance of God's " ſupremacy; and that it was ſo underſtood, we have, if I miſtake " not, a very antient teſtimony in the book of Job: ' with God is " ſtrength and wiſdom, the deceived and the deceiver are his:' i. e. " equally ſubject to his command, Job xii. 16. The belief of God's " ſupreme dominion, which is the foundation of all religion, being " thus preſerved, it was ſtill neceſſary to give them ſuch hopes as " might make them capable of religion toward God. Theſe hopes " they could not but conceive, when they heared from the mouth of " God that this ſerpent's victory was not a complete victory over even " themſelves: that they and their poſterity ſhould be enabled to con- " teſt his empire; and though they were to ſuffer much in the ſtruggle, " yet finally they ſhould prevail and bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and " deliver themſelves from his power and dominion over them. What " now could they conceive this conqueſt over the ſerpent to mean? " Is it not natural to expect, that we ſhall recover that by victory, " which we loſt by being defeated? They knew that the enemy had " ſubdued them by ſin; could they then conceive hopes of victory " otherwiſe than by righteouſneſs? They loſt through ſin the hap- " pineſs of their creation; could they expect leſs from the return of " righteouſneſs than the recovery of the bleſſings forfeited? What elſe " but this could they expect? for the certain knowledge they had of " their loſs, when the ſerpent prevailed, could not but lead them to " a clear knowledge of what they ſhould regain by prevailing againſt " the ſerpent. The language of this prophecy is indeed in part me- " taphorical, but 'tis a great miſtake to think that all metaphors are

" of uncertain ſignification; for the deſign and ſcope of the ſpeaker, " with the circumſtances attending, create a fixed and determinate " ſenſe. Were it otherwiſe, there would be no certainty in any " language; all languages, the eaſtern more eſpecially, abounding " in metaphors.

" Let us now look back to our ſubject, and ſee what application we " are to make of this inſtance.

" This prophecy was to our firſt parents but very obſcure; it was, " in the phraſe of St. Peter, but 'a light ſhining in a dark place;' all " that they could certainly conclude from it was, that their caſe was " not deſperate; that ſome remedy, that ſome deliverance from the " evil they were under, would in time appear; but when, or where, " or by what means, they could not underſtand: their own ſentence, " which returned them back again to the duſt of the earth, made it " difficult to apprehend what this victory over the ſerpent ſhould ſig- " nify, or how they, who were ſhortly to be duſt and aſhes, ſhould be " the better for it. But, after all that can be urged upon this head to " ſet out the obſcurity of this promiſe, I would aſk one queſtion; Was " not this promiſe or prophecy, though ſurrounded with all this ob- " ſcurity, a foundation for religion, and truſt and confidence towards " God after the fall, in hopes of deliverance from the evils introduced " by diſobedience? If it was, it fully anſwered the neceſſity of their " caſe, to whom it was given, and manifeſted to them all that God " intended to make manifeſt. They could have had towards God no " religion, without ſome hopes of mercy: it was neceſſary therefore " to convey ſuch hopes; but to tell them how theſe hopes ſhould be " accompliſhed, at what time and manner preciſely, was not neceſ- " ſary to their religion. And what is now to be objected againſt this " prophecy? It is very obſcure, you ſay; ſo it is; but it is obſcure in " the points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and " which were not neceſſary then to be known. You ſee a plain reaſon " for giving this prophecy, and as far as the reaſon for giving the pro- " phecy extends, ſo far the prophecy is very plain: it is obſcure only " where there is no reaſon why it ſhould be plain; which ſurely is a " fault eaſily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper ſubject " for complaint.

" But if this prophecy conveyed to our firſt parents only a general " hope and expectation of pardon and reſtoration, and was intended " by God to convey no more to them, how came we their poſterity " to find ſo much more in this promiſe than we ſuppoſe them to find? " how is it that we pretend to diſcover Chriſt in this prophecy, to " ſee in it the myſtery of his birth, his ſufferings, and his final tri- " umph over all the powers of darkneſs? By what new light do we " diſcern all theſe ſecrets? By what art do we unfold them?

" 'Tis no wonder to me, that ſuch as come to the examination of " the prophecies applied to Chriſt, expecting to find in each of them " ſome expreſs character and mark of Chriſt, plainly to be underſtood " as ſuch antecedently to his coming, ſhould aſk theſe, or any other " the like queſtions; or that the argument from antient pro-

" phecy

" phecy ſhould appear ſo light and trivial to thoſe who know no
" better uſe of it.

" ' Known unto God are all his works from the beginning;' and
" whatever degree of light he thought fit to communicate to our firſt
" parents, or to their children in after-times, there is no doubt but
" that he had a perfect knowledge at all times of all the methods by
" which he intended to reſcue and reſtore mankind; and therefore all
" the notices given by him to mankind of his intended ſalvation, muſt
" correſpond to the great event, whenever the fulneſs of time ſhall make
" it manifeſt. No reaſon can be given why God ſhould at all times,
" or at any time, clearly open the ſecrets of his providence to Men; it
" depends merely upon his good pleaſure to do it in what time and in
" what manner he thinks proper. But there is a neceſſary reaſon to
" be given why all ſuch notices as God thinks fit to give ſhould anſwer
" exactly in due time to the completion of the great deſign: it is ab-
" ſurd therefore to complain of the antient prophecies for being ob-
" ſcure; for it is challenging God for not telling us more of his ſe-
" crets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifeſted to us,
" by the revelation of the Goſpel, the method of his ſalvation, it is
" neceſſary for us to ſhew that all the notices of this ſalvation given
" to the old world do correſpond to the things which we have ſeen
" and heard with our eyes. The argument from prophecy there-
" fore is not to be formed in this manner: ' all the antient prophecies
" have expreſsly pointed out and characterized Chriſt Jeſus.' But
" it muſt be formed in this manner: ' all the notices which God gave
" the fathers of his intended ſalvation are perfectly anſwered by the
" coming of Chriſt.' He never promiſed or engaged his word in
" any particular relating to the common ſalvation, but what he has
" fully made good by ſending his ſon to our redemption. Let us try
" theſe methods upon the prophecy before us. If you demand that
" we ſhould ſhew you, *a priori*, Chriſt Jeſus ſet forth in this prophecy,
" and that God had limited himſelf by this promiſe to convey the
" bleſſings intended by ſending his own ſon in the fleſh, and by no
" other means whatever, you demand what I cannot ſhew, nor do I
" know who can. But if you enquire whether this prophecy, in the
" obvious and moſt natural meaning of it, in that ſenſe in which our
" firſt parents, and their children after, might eaſily underſtand it,
" has been verified by the coming of Chriſt, I conceive it may be
" made as clear as the ſun at noon-day, that all the expectation
" raiſed by this prophecy has been completely anſwered by the re-
" demption wrought by Jeſus Chriſt. And what have you to deſire
" more than to ſee a prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you inſiſt that
" the prophecy ſhould have been more expreſs, you muſt de-
" mand of God why he gave you no more light; but you ought
" at leaſt to ſuſpend this demand till you have a reaſon to ſhew
" for it.

" I know that this prophecy is urged farther, and that Chriſ-
" tian writers argue from the expreſſions of it, to ſhew that
" Chriſt is therein particularly foretold: he properly is the ſeed of a

" woman in a ſenſe in which no other ever was; his ſufferings were " well prefigured 'by the bruiſing of the heel,' his complete victory " over ſin and death by 'bruiſing the ſerpent's head.' When unbe- " lievers hear ſuch reaſonings, they think themſelves intitled to laugh; " but their ſcorn be to themſelves. We readily allow that the ex- " preſſions do not imply neceſſarily this ſenſe: we allow farther, that " there is no appearance that our firſt parents underſtood them in this " ſenſe, or that God intended they ſhould ſo underſtand them: but " ſince this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Chriſt, and by the " event appropriated to him only; I would fain know how it comes " to be conceived to be ſo ridiculous a thing in us, to ſuppoſe that " God, to whom the whole event was known from the begining *, " ſhould make choice of ſuch expreſſions, as naturally conveyed ſo " much knowledge as he intended to convey to our firſt parents, and " yet ſhould appear in the fulneſs of time to have been peculiarly " adapted to the event, which he from the beginning ſaw, and which " he intended the world ſhould one day ſee; and which when they " ſhould ſee, they might the more eaſily acknowledge to be the work " of his hand, by the ſecret evidence which he had incloſed from the " days of old in the words of prophecy. However the wit of man may " deſpiſe this method, yet there is nothing in it unbecoming the wiſ- " dom of God. And when we ſee this to be the caſe, not only in " this inſtance, but in many other prophecies of the Old Teſtament, " it is not without reaſon we conclude, that under the obſcurity of " antient prophecy there was an evidence of God's truth kept in reſerve, " to be made manifeſt in due time."

The exquiſite and maſterly ſenſe, clearneſs and force of reaſon, which is ſo conſpicuous in this paſſage, that every common reader muſt perceive, and every judicious one admire it; and the pertinency of it to the preſent ſubject, will, I doubt not, ſufficiently atone for the length of the quotation.

In all the books of Moſes I find no other prophecy but this relating to the death and ſufferings of Chriſt; I ſhall therefore, according to the method pointed out in the words of our Saviour, proceed in the next place to the Prophets; and firſt produce one out of Iſaiah, whoſe application to the Meſſiah the moſt obſtinate enemies of the Goſpel have not been able to deny.

Iſaiah, Ch. liii. " Who hath believed our report? And to whom " is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he ſhall grow up before him " as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no " form nor comelineſs, and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty " that we ſhould deſire him. 'He is deſpiſed and rejected of men, " a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief,' and we hid as it were

* " Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none elſe; I am " God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from an- " tient times the things that are not yet done, ſaying, My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will " do all my pleaſure." Iſa. xlvi. 9, 10.

" The works of the Lord are done in judgement from the beginning; and from the " time he made them, he diſpoſed the parts thereof." Eccluſ. xvi. 26.

" our

" our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not;
" surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did
" esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was
" wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:
" the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes
" we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned
" every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the ini-
" quity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he
" 'opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
" and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his
" mouth.' He was taken from * prison and from judgement: and
" who shall declare his generation? For 'he was cut off out of the
" land of the living;' for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
" 'And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his
" death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in
" his mouth.' Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put
" him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he
" shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the
" Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travel of his
" soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous
" servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquites. Therefore
" will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the
" spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death,
" 'and he was numbered with the transgressors,' and he bare the sin
" of many, and 'made intercession for the transgressors."

It is impossible for any one, who is the least acquainted with the history of Christ, not to perceive many circumstances of his life, his sufferings and his death, plainly pointed at in this prophecy; and indeed so apparently and so completely was it fulfilled in Christ, that the later Rabbins, to avoid the conclusions which the Christians might draw from this and other prophecies in favour of the Gospel, have invented a distinction of a double Messias; " one † who was to redeem
" us, and another who was to suffer for us; for they say, that there
" are two several persons promised under the name of the Messias; one
" of the tribe of Ephraim, the other of the tribe of Judah; one the
" son of Joseph, the other the son of David; the one to precede, fight,
" and suffer death; the other to follow, conquer, reign, and never to
" die." But bishop Pearson, from whom I have borrowed this remark, has clearly shewed this distinction to be not only false in itself, but advantageous to the Christian faith, as admitting a suffering Messias to be foretold by the Prophets; and has also proved, ‡ that the antient Rabbins did understand this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to be a description of the Messias, without any intimation of a double Messias, an invention introduced by the modern Jews, to favour their vain expectations of a temporal prince and deliverer.

* The margin of the Bible has it, " he was taken away by distress and judgement."
† See Pearson on the Creed, p. 185. ‡ Pearson on the Creed, p. 57.

For what is farther to be conſidered out of the other prophecies, and eſpecially the Pſalms, relating to this ſubject, I cannot do better than to give it to the reader in the words of the ſame biſhop Pearſon, whoſe obſervations upon the ſeveral articles concerning the ſufferings, &c. of Jeſus, I would wiſh him to conſider.

" * All which [the predictions of his ſufferings, and particularly " this fifty-third chapter of Iſaiah, compared with his life] if we look " upon in the groſs, we muſt acknowledge it fulfilled in him [Jeſus] " to the higheſt degree imaginable, ' that he was a man of ſorrows " and acquainted with grief.' But if we compare the particular pre- " dictions with the hiſtorical paſſages of his ſufferings, if we join the " prophets and evangeliſts together, it will moſt manifeſtly appear " the Meſſias was to ſuffer nothing which Chriſt hath not ſuffered. " If Zachary ſay †, ' they weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſil- " ver;' St. Matthew ‡ will ſhew, that Judas ſold Jeſus at the ſame " rate; for the chief prieſts ' covenanted with him for thirty pieces " of ſilver.' If Iſaiah ſay § ' that he was wounded;' if Zachary ‖, " ' they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced;' if the prophet " David yet more particularly **, ' they pierced my hands and my " feet;' the evangeliſts will ſhew how he was faſtened to the croſs, " and Jeſus himſelf †† ' the print of the nails.' If the Pſalmiſt tells " us, they ſhould ‡‡ ' laugh him to ſcorn, and ſhake their head, " ſaying, he truſted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him " deliver him, ſaying he delighted in him;' St. Matthew will deſcribe " the ſame action, and the ſame expreſſions: for §§ ' they that paſſed " by reviled him, wagging their heads, and ſaying, He truſted in God, " let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he ſaid, I am the " ſon of God.' Let David ſay, ‖‖ ' My God, my God, why haſt " thou forſaken me?' and the ſon of David will ſhew in whoſe perſon " the Father ſpoke it, ' Eli, Eli, lama ſabacthani?' Let Iſaiah fore- " tell *** ' He was numbered with the tranſgreſſors,' and you ſhall " find him ††† ' crucified between two thieves, one on his right-hand " the other on his left. Read in the Pſalmiſt ‡‡‡, ' in my thirſt " they gave me vinegar to drink;' and you ſhall find in the evange- " liſt §§§, ' Jeſus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, ſaid, I thirſt; " and they took a ſponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it " on a reed, and gave him to drink.' Read farther yet ‖‖‖, ' they " part my garments among them, and caſt lots upon my veſture;' " and to fulfill the prediction, the ſoldiers ſhall make good the " diſtinction ****, ' who took his garments, and made four parts, " to every ſoldier a part, and alſo his coat: now the coat was with- " out ſeam, woven from the top throughout. They ſaid therefore " among themſelves, let us not rend it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe " it ſhall be.' Laſtly, let the prophets teach us, †††† ' that he

* Pearſon on the Creed, p. 88. † Zach. xi. 12. ‡ Matth. xxvi. 15.
§ Iſa. liii. 5. ‖ Zach xii. 10. ** Pſ. xxii 16. †† John xx. 25.
‡‡ Pſ. xxii. 7—8. §§ Mat. xvii. 39—43. ‖‖ Pſ. xxii. 1. *** Mat. xvii. 46.
††† Iſ. liii. 12. ‡‡‡ Mark xv. 27. §§§ Pſalm xxii 18. ‖‖‖ Johd xix. 24.
**** Matth. xxvii. 48. †††† Pſ. xxii. 18.

" ſhall

" ſhall be brought like a lamb to the ſlaughter, and be cut off out of " the land of the living;' all the evangeliſts will declare how like a " lamb he ſuffered, and the very Jews will acknowledge that he was " cut off."

Theſe inſtances, I imagine, are ſufficient to ſhew, that, according to the prophets, " thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to die. That his burial alſo, and his reſurrection, were in like manner foretold, will appear by the following paſſages.

Iſaiah, in the above-quoted chapter, ver. 9. ſpeaks of his burial in theſe words, " and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the " rich in his death," the circumſtantial accompliſhment of which is too remarkable not to be taken notice of.

* The power of life and death had been taken from the Jews and lodged in the hands of the Roman governor, from the time that Auguſtus annexed Judea to the province of Syria; which was done ſome years after the birth of Chriſt. The chief prieſts therefore and rulers of the Jews were obliged to apply to Pontius Pilate, not only to put Jeſus to death, but for leave to take down his body and thoſe of the two malefactors executed with him, " that they might not remain " upon the croſs on the Sabbath-day." For among the Romans (with whom crucifixion was the uſual capital puniſhment for ſlaves, robbers, &c. under the degree of Roman citizens), it was cuſtomary to let the carcaſs hang on the croſs till it was either conſumed by time or devoured by birds and beaſts. Upon a petition, however, of the executed perſon's friends or relations, leave to bury them was ſeldom or never refuſed; and hence Pilate without any difficulty yielded to the application of the Jews for taking down the bodies, and gave permiſſion to Joſeph of Arimathea to bury that of Jeſus. What became of the bodies of the two thieves after they were taken down from the croſs is not mentioned by any of the evangeliſts. That they were buried is almoſt certain; becauſe not only the cuſtom of the Jews, but the expreſs words of Moſes † required, " If a man have committed a " ſin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him " on a tree, his body ſhall not remain all night upon the tree, but " thou ſhalt in any wiſe bury him that day, that thy land be not de- " filed." Which precept was doubtleſs the reaſon of their petitioning Pilate to have the bodies taken from the croſs that day, enforced by the additional conſideration of the particular ſolemnity and ſanctity of the paſchal ſabbath then immediately enſuing. And that they were buried in or near the place of crucifixion is, I think, moſt probable, for the following reaſons. Firſt, the place where they were executed was called Golgotha, i. e. ‡ " a place of a ſkull," a name in all likelihood derived to it from the number of ſkulls, which (if it was the uſual place of execution, as from this inſtance it is moſt reaſonable to conclude it was) might frequently have been found there, either fallen from bodies left to putrify on the croſs, or turned up by the opening the ground for ſuch malefactors as the governor permitted to be buried.

* See Pearſon on the Creed, art. 4. † Deut. xxi. 22—23. ‡ Matth xxvii. 23.

Secondly,

Secondly, the paſchal ſabbath * was drawing on apace. For as among the Jews the day was always reckoned to commence from the evening, ſo, for the greater caution, were they accuſtomed to begin the ſabbatical reſt from all kind of work an hour before ſun-ſet; but on this day, which was the preparation of the paſſover, the holy hours (if I may ſo ſpeak) began ſtill earlier; becauſe the † paſchal lambs were always ſlain between the ninth and eleventh hours, within which ſpace of time the whole multitude of Jews repaired to the temple ‡, where alone the paſſover was killed, and having there offered the blood and entrails of the paſchal victims, they brought back the remaining carcaſs to dreſs and eat it at their homes, according to the Moſaical inſtitution. The Jews could not then be much preſſed in time, for the ninth hour was begun before our Saviour expired, and the ſoldiers coming after that time to the two malefactors, found them not yet dead; and therefore, by a cruel kind of mercy to put an end to a painful life, and to diſpatch them the more ſpeedily, broke their legs, the Coup de Grace obtained for thoſe miſerable wretches of the Roman governor by the Jews, and intended likewiſe for him, who, though innocent, and delivered up by their malice to that infamous and horid death, yet, with a benevolence and generoſity unparalleled, interceded for them even upon the croſs, in theſe compaſſionate terms, "Father, § forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Now as Jeſus, and conſequently the two thieves, did not expire till after the ninth hour, as the Jews were obliged to repair to the temple before the eleventh hour, at the expiration of which the ſabbatical reſt from all kinds of work began; and as they were ſolicitous that the bodies ſhould be taken down and buried before the commencement of that high and ſolemn day; it is moſt likely they buried them at or near the place where they were crucified; becauſe they had not time to carry them to any great diſtance; becauſe Golgotha, from its name, ſeems to have been a place of burial for thoſe who had been executed there; and becauſe the want of time is the very reaſon given in the evangeliſt for laying the body of Jeſus in the ſepulchre of Joſeph of Arimathæa, which was near adjoining, as St. John tells us in theſe words: ‖ "now in the place where he was crucified there was a gar-"den, and in this garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man "yet laid." There laid they Jeſus therefore becauſe of the Jews preparation, for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand. Here then we may ſee and admire the exact completion of this famous prophecy of Iſaiah: "he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in "his death." He was buried like the wicked companions of his death under the general leave granted to the Jews for taking down their bodies from the croſs; and was like them buried in or near the place of execution. But here the diſtinction, foreſeen and foretold many hundred years before, took place in favour of Jeſus, who, though "num-"bered with the tranſgreſſors, had done no violence, neither was "there any deceit in his mouth:" for Joſeph of Arimathæa **, "a

* Grotius, ad ver. 58. 27. Mat. † Ibid. xxvi. Mat. 2. ‡ Lamy diſſert. de Paſch.
§ Luke xxiii. 34. ‖ Chap. xix. 41, 42. ** Mat. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 43.

"rich

" rich man, and an honourable counſellor, and Nicodemus *, a " man of the Phariſees, a ruler of the Jews, a maſter of Iſrael, con- " ſpired † to make his grave with the rich, by wrapping his body in " linen-clothes, with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred " pound weight, and laying it in a new ſepulchre" hewed or hollowed into a rock, which Joſeph of Arimathæa had cauſed to be made for his own uſe; circumſtances which evidently ſhew, that he was not only buried by the rich, but like the rich alſo according to the prophecy.

The words of David ‡ foretelling the reſurrection of Chriſt, together with St. Peter's comment upon them, I ſhall inſert entire as they ſtand in the ſecond chapter of the Acts, the 25th and following verſes.

" For David ſpeaketh concerning him, I foreſaw the Lord always " before my face; for he is on my right-hand, that I ſhould not be " moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; " moreover alſo my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope, becauſe thou wilt not " leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to " ſee corruption. Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life, " thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and " brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the patriarch David, that " he is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us unto this " day; therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn " with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to " the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit upon his throne; he ſeeing " this before, ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was " not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption."

The apoſtle's reaſoning was very well underſtood by the Jews, and ſo convincing, that § " three thouſand ſouls were that day added" to the church, and baptized into the faith of Chriſt. His argument ſtands thus. You acknowledge David to be a prophet, who under his own perſon often ſpake of the Meſſiah. To the Meſſiah therefore belong theſe words; " thou ſhalt not leave my ſoul [life] in hell " [*hades*, the grave]; neither ſhalt || thou ſuffer thy holy one to ſee " corruption;" becauſe they are by no means applicable to David, who it is not pretended ever roſe from the dead; on the contrary, he was buried, and his body remained and putrified in his ſepulchre, which " is with us even to this day." But by divine illumination he foreſaw that the Meſſiah, or Chriſt, who according to the fleſh was to deſcend from him, ſhould be raiſed up from the dead, to " ſit upon " his throne," i. e. to reign like him over the people of God; and therefore he foretold the reſurrection of Chriſt in words moſt exactly fulfilled in Jeſus, who roſe alive out of the grave in ſo ſhort a time after his death, that " he ſaw no corruption," whereof, adds he, " we are witneſſes."

Concerning theſe words no other queſtion can be raiſed, than whether they relate to the Meſſiah, for to David moſt certainly they can never be applied. If they relate to the Meſſiah, then was Jeſus the

* John xix. 39, 40. † Iſa. liii. 9. ‡ Pſal. xvi. 8, &c. § Acts ii. 41.
|| Pſ. xvi. 11. See Whitby on this paſſage.

Meſſiah;

Meſſiah; for in his reſurrection were they accompliſhed; and doubtleſs the three thouſand Jews, who were converted by the preaching of Peter, acknowledged both the one and the other of theſe propoſitions. And, indeed, by the manner in which theſe words of the Pſalmiſt were urged by St. Peter, and afterwards by * St. Paul, it ſeems to have been by them taken for granted, that, as they were not applicable to David, they muſt be underſtood of the Meſſiah, whom therefore, according to Moſes, the Prophets, and the Pſalmiſt, it behoved to ſuffer, to die, to be buried, and to riſe again from the dead.

Beſides the expreſs words of the prophecy, there were ſeveral predictions of another kind, of the ſufferings, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt, held forth in types and figures; ſuch as thoſe two mentioned by our Saviour, and applied to himſelf; † "as Moſes," ſays he, "lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man "be lifted up:" and again, "as Jonas was three days and three "nights in the whale's belly, ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days "and three nights in the heart of the earth:" ‡ The paſchal lamb, alluded to by St. Paul in theſe words, "Chriſt our paſſover is ſlain;" the weaved ſheaf alluded to in like manner by the ſame apoſtle, 1 Cor, xv. 20. 23. Rom. xi. 16. and many others. I ſhall not here enquire how far, and in what caſes, an argument from types and figures may be admitted, but ſhall content myſelf with quoting a paſſage relating to this point out of the incomparable diſcourſes of biſhop Sherlock § upon prophecy, as follows:

"Another queſtion, proper to be conſidered with reſpect to the "ſtate of religion under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, in this: how far "the religion of the Jews was preparatory to that new diſpenſation, "which was in due time to be revealed, in accompliſhment of the "promiſe made to all nations. Now if Abraham and his poſterity "were choſen, not merely for their own ſakes, or out of any par-"tial views and regards towards them, but to be inſtruments in the "hand of God for bringing about his great deſigns in the world; if "the temporal government was given for the ſake of the everlaſting "covenant, and to be ſubſervient to the introduction of it, 'tis "highly probable, that all the parts of the Jewiſh diſpenſation were "adapted to ſerve the ſame end; and that the law founded on the "temporal covenant was intended, as the temporal covenant itſelf "was, to prepare the way to better promiſes. If this, upon the "whole, appears to be a reaſonable ſuppoſition, then have we a "foundation to inquire into the meaning of the law, not merely as "it is a literal command to the Jews, but as containing the figure "and image of good things to come. It can hardly be ſuppoſed, that "God, intending finally to ſave the world by Chriſt, and the preach-"ing of the Goſpel, ſhould give an intermediate law, which had no "reſpect nor relation to the covenant which he intended to eſtabliſh "for ever. And whoever will be at the pains to conſider ſeriouſly

* Acts xiii. 35. † John iii. 14. Num. xxi. 9. Matt. xii. 40. Jonas i. 17. and ii. 10.
‡ See Lamy's diſſ. de paſch. and Pearſon upon the Creed. § Page 144.

"the

" the whole adminiſtration of providence together, from the begin-
" ning to the end, may ſee perhaps more reaſon than he imagines
" to allow of types and figures in the Jewiſh law.

" To proceed then: the Jewiſh diſpenſation not conveying to all
" nations the bleſſing promiſed through Abraham's ſeed, but being
" only the adminiſtration of the hopes and expectations, created by
" the promiſe of God; in rhis reſpect it ſtood entirely upon the word
" of prophecy; for future hopes and expectations from God can have
" no other real foundation. Inaſmuch then as the Jewiſh religion did
" virtually contain the hopes of the Goſpel, the religion itſelf was a
" prophecy, &c."

That the Jewiſh rabbins, and the fathers of the Chriſtian church, as well as our Saviour and his apoſtles, underſtood many things in the law of Moſes, in the hiſtorical books of the Old Teſtament, in the Prophets and the Pſalms, to be types and ſhadows of things to come, is very certain; and if the two former carried their conceits upon this head farther than reaſon or ſenſe could allow them to do, types and figures are not upon that pretence to be wholly rejected; eſpecially as many precepts and ceremonies in the Moſaic inſtitution may very well be accounted for by ſuppoſing them intended as images and ſhadows of things to come, and can but ill be reconciled to the wiſdom of the lawgiver without ſuch a ſolution. And if ſuch types be once admitted, it will be no difficult matter to ſhew that they were fulfilled in Chriſt Jeſus, as the great antitype to which they all referred.

§ 9. Whoever takes an attentive view of the predictions relating to the Meſſiah *, contained in the writings of Moſes, the Prophets, and the Pſalmiſt, will perceive the great ſcheme of providence in the deliverance of mankind from the power of ſin and death, opening by degrees, in a ſucceſſion of prophecies through the ſeveral ages of the world; each of which, in proportion, as the accompliſhment of the wonderful and gracious purpoſe of God advanced, grew more explicit and particular; till they came at laſt to point out the very times and perſon of the expected deliverer. Thus the promiſe of redemption to mankind, which was given to our firſt parents in very general and obſcure words, † " The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the
" ſerpent's head," importing, that ſome of their deſcendants ſhould vanquiſh their great enemy, was renewed to Abraham in clearer terms, and limited to his deſcendants through Iſaac, ‡ " in thy ſeed ſhall
" the nations of the earth be bleſſed:" then to Jacob the younger of the two ſons of Iſaac; and afterwards to Judah and his children; and laſtly to the family of § David, who was of the tribe of Judah. The particular ſtock, from which this branch of righteouſneſs and immortality was to proceed, being thus limited and ſettled, God was pleaſed, in the next place, to bring into a nearer and more diſtinct view the long-promiſed ſeed, declaring by his prophets the preciſe time of his coming, the place, and miraculous manner of his birth, and ſo many wonderful particulars of his life, his ſufferings, and his

* See bp. Sherlock's diſc. on the uſe and intent of prophecy, &c.
† Gen. iii. 15. ‡ Gen. xxi. 18, Ib. xxvii. 29. xlix. 1. § 2 Sam. i 12.

death;

death; that by such characteristical marks and notices he might, when he should come, be readily and plainly known. These prophecies, some of them at least; were not only at the time of their delivery, but even to that of their accomplishment, very dark and obscure: but that obscurity proceeded not so much from the terms in which they were expressed, as from the things foretold; which were so seemingly inconsistent, that no human wisdom could reconcile them with each other. For as they sometimes represented the Messiah under the character of a deliverer, a "prince whose throne should "endure for ever, the desire of all nations, the holy one," &c, so at other times they spake of him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted "with griefs, as despised and rejected of men; as afflicted, smitten, "wounded, bruised and scourged; numbered with the transgressors, "cut off out of the land of the living; and making his grave with "the wicked," and yet, "with the rich in his death." So much however of these prophecies was at all times clear, that from them the Jews, to whom they were delivered, were encouraged to expect a redeemer to come at a certain limited time; and so exactly were they able to compute the period prefixed by the prophet Daniel, that at the birth of Christ there was a general expectation among the Jews, which from them spread into other nations, of a great king being about that time to be born in Judea. The place also of his birth, and the stock from which he was to spring, were as clearly understood: but the Jews, too much attached to the temporal covenant, proud of being the chosen and peculiar people of God, and, from that pride, not comprehending the full extent of the promise made to Abraham, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be "blessed," expected a temporal deliverer, a king of the Jews only, considered still as a separate and distinct nation. The Jews, they imagined, were alone to be redeemed, and that from their temporal enemies, and under their Messiah were to reign for ever over the other kings and nations of the earth: and from this imagination, than which nothing could be more contrary to the express promises made to Abraham, nor more injurious to the character of that God, whose mercy is universally over all his works, proceeded their blindness and backwardness in seeing and believing all that the Prophets had spoken, and their indignation against Jesus, for assuming the title, without asserting, what they seemed to be, the kingdom of the Messiah, the throne of David. With the same prejudices were the disciples and apostles themselves so strongly prepossessed, that when he told them of his sufferings and death, * "Peter rebuked him, saying, "be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee." Jesus however suffered and died, and rose again from the dead, as he had foretold; and, notwithstanding his sufferings, still claimed to be the Messiah, nay, and even founded his claim upon those very sufferings, asserting, that according to the prophets, "thus it behoved the Mes-"siah to suffer." To the prophets he therefore sends them for their conviction, and for the removing those prejudices, which, as long

* Matt. xvi. 22.

as

as they ſubſiſted, muſt have kept them effectually from ever acknowledging his claim, unleſs they would renounce thoſe Scriptures upon whoſe authority alone their expectations of a Meſſiah were grounded. For if the prophets ſpake only of a victorious triumphant redeemer of Iſrael, a king who ſhould never die, it is certain Jeſus could not be that redeemer; for he was oppreſſed and afflicted, and, inſtead of delivering the Jews, was himſelf delivered up to their enemies, and by them put to death. What the prophets have written about the ſufferings, &c. of the Meſſiah, we have juſt now ſeen; and cannot, I think, but acknowledge their predictions to be very clear and expreſs, and to have been moſt circumſtantially accompliſhed in Chriſt Jeſus; and perhaps to us, who are not blinded with the vain imaginations of the Jews, it may ſeem matter of wonder that the apoſtles ſhould ſo long and ſo obſtinately ſhut their eyes againſt ſo ſtrong a light. The truth is, they were unwilling to give up the pleaſing and flattering expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they underſtood to be plainly ſpoken of by the Prophets, and knew to be incompatible with a ſuffering, dying Meſſiah. By expounding, therefore, "in Moſes and all "the Prophets the things concerning himſelf, and by opening their "underſtandings, that they might underſtand the Scripture," Jeſus at length brought them to perceive that the kingdom of the Meſſiah was not a temporal, but a ſpiritual and eternal kingdom; that the redemption promiſed to Adam and the patriarchs was not the redemption of the children of Iſrael only from their carnal enemies and oppreſſors (an event in which the firſt Father of the world, and even the patriarchs themſelves, could have little or no intereſt), but the redemption of all mankind from the power and penalty of ſin; to be effected on the one hand by "Chriſt's fulfilling all righteouſneſs," the original covenant, upon which happineſs and immortality was ſtipulated to Adam; and, on the other, by his "offering up his ſoul a ſacrifice for "ſin, i. e. paying the penalty of death, which all ſinners, all man-"kind had incurred; paying it not as a debtor, for he was without "ſin," but as a ſurety, who willingly and freely took upon himſelf to make good the failings, and diſcharge the obligations of others. Of this plan the death of Chriſt was a neceſſary part; and ſo was his reſurrection from the dead, by which, having vanquiſhed that enemy, who brought death and ſin into the world, he was put into poſſeſſion of that throne which was "to endure for ever;" and was, like David, appointed by God to reign, not over the Jewiſh nation excluſive of the reſt of mankind, but over all thoſe of every nation of the world, who ſhould, like the Jews, make themſelves the people of God, by entering into a covenant with him to keep his commandments; the ſole tenure by which the children of Iſrael became originally the people of God: over whom, as ſuch, God, their legal, their conſtitutional king, if I may ſo ſpeak, ſet David as a ruler under him, and promiſed to continue that delegated vicarial ſceptre of righteouſneſs in his poſterity for ever. Of all theſe points there are frequent intimations in the books of Moſes, in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms: by a fair and unprejudiced examination of which, the

diſciples

diſciples and apoſtles might be certainly convinced, that, according to the ſcheme of the redemption of mankind promiſed to Adam and the patriarchs, as well as by the expreſs words of prophecy, the Meſſiah was to die and riſe again from the dead. And as, on the one part, had the ſcriptures been ſilent upon the latter of theſe two articles, they had, from the teſtimony of their own ſenſes, &c. ſufficient proofs of Chriſt's being riſen from the dead; ſo, on the other, from the exact accompliſhment of all the predictions relating to his life, his ſufferings, his death and burial, they might, without any farther evidence than that of his body's being no where to be found, have infallibly collected from the Scriptures only, that he was riſen from the dead. And therefore, when all theſe teſtimonies concurred to prove the reſurrection, how was it poſſible for them to with-hold their aſſent?

The prophecies of Jeſus himſelf concerning his riſing from the dead on the third day, were another proof of the ſame kind, upon which they might as reaſonably and as certainly depend, as upon that grounded on the predictions of Moſes and the prophets. Moſes had foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould be a prophet, and they had been convinced that Jeſus was one in the largeſt ſenſe of that word, by many inſtances which had fallen under their own obſervation, thoſe particularly relating to his paſſion and crucifixion, moſt of the minute and extraordinary circumſtances of which he had acquainted them with before they came to paſs: ſuch as the treachery of Judas, the deſertion of his diſciples, Peter's diſowning him thrice, the inſults and abuſes he underwent from the Chief Prieſts and Elders, and the cruel mockery of the Roman ſoldiers. The exact correſpondence of each of theſe events, with their ſeveral predictions, afforded the ſtrongeſt preſumption imaginable in favour of the reſurrection, as it was in like manner foretold by him, of whoſe preſcience they had juſt then received ſo many convincing proofs; eſpecially as ſome of the predicted events were of ſuch a nature as not to be foreſeen but by that eye which penetrates into the inmoſt receſſes of the heart of man, and ſpieth out all his thoughts even before they are conceived. For although the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees had for ſome time "fought how they might "put him to death *," yet they had reſolved againſt doing it on the "Feaſt-day for fear of the people †," who but a very few days before had, in a ſort of triumphal proceſſion, attended his entry into Jeruſalem, "cutting down branches of palm, ſtrewing them be-"fore him, ſpreading their garments in the way, and crying Ho-"ſannah, bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Yet on the Feaſt-day was he put to death at the inſtance of the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees; and by the clamours of this very people, againſt the inclination and endeavours of Pilate, in whom the power of life and death reſided; and who, as his judge, declared him innocent again and again; and when he gave him up to be

* Matth. xv. † Mark xi. 8—9.

crucified,

crucified *, " took water and washed his hands before the multi-
" tude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person;
" see ye to it." This sudden change of the counsels of the Chief Priests in the hearts of the multitude, and in the manners of Pontius Pilate †, who was a man of a haughty, rough, untractable, and implacable spirit, who, so far from having any complaisance for the Jewish nation, or regard for their customs or religion, had all along treated them with the most cruel and tyrannical insolence, and who more than once had contemptuously acted in direct opposition to their most just and reasonable demands; a change, I say, so sudden, from one extreme to another, could not with any certainty be previously deduced from the consideration of the instability of human counsels, and the fickleness of the mind of man. The same thing may be said concerning the desertion of his disciples, and Peter's disowning him thrice, each of which events came to pass within a few hours after they were foretold, and within the very time prefixed; contrary to their express and confident declarations, that though they ‡ " should die with him, they would never deny" [renounce] " him," made at the time and upon the occasion of this very prophecy. Add to this the inhuman abuses, insults, and mockery, he endured from the Chief Priests, and from the Roman soldiers; for these, surely, were no usual part of the punishment inflicted upon criminals; the most flagitious of whom are seldom treated with more severity than their sentence requires; especially when that sentence extends to taking away their lives by a lingering and painful death. And our Saviour's case, undoubtedly, deserved more than ordinary compassion, especially from the Roman soldiers, as he had been pronounced innocent by the Roman governor himself, and was known to be sacrificed only to the envy and malice of the Jews. Therefore that Jesus, who foretold all these extraordinary particulars, was endued with the all-prescient spirit of God, the disciples could have no reason to doubt; and consequently could have as little cause to call his resurrection in question, which he had foreseen and foretold by the same divine spirit, from whom no event, how remote or uncommon soever, can be concealed, and who can never deceive or lye. And therefore the Apostles, even without the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen, without the authority of the Scriptures foretelling his resurrection, and without the infallible proofs of his being alive after his passion, which they themselves received from seeing him, handling him, and conversing with him, might and ought to have believed that he was risen from the dead, upon the single evidence of his having predicted it, joined to that of his body's being no where to be found; as St. John in fact did, and was therefore pronounced blessed by our Saviour himself, in these words spoken to St. Thomas upon the occasion of his refusing to believe without the attestation of his senses: " Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou

* Matth. xxvii. 24. † Pearson on the Creed, p. 196. ‡ Matt xxvi. 33.

" haſt believed; bleſſed are they who have not ſeen, and yet have " believed." Upon which more hereafter.

I ſhall here reſt the cauſe, and cloſe the evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus; ſince it is manifeſt that the apoſtles, who were to be witneſſes of this great event, and preachers of the Goſpel to all the world, had no doubt or ſcruple left concerning his being really (i. e. bodily) riſen from the dead, after his appearing to St. Thomas *; for they went into " Galilee, to a mountain where Jeſus " had appointed them," in obedience to his command, and in expectation of meeting him there according to his promiſe, " where " when they ſaw him they worſhiped him;" from thence they returned again to Jeruſalem, and continued in that city in obedience to another command †, " waiting for the promiſe of the Father," which within a few days after was made good to them by the coming of the Holy Ghoſt. Upon theſe two points I beg leave to ſay a few words, for the better underſtanding ſome paſſages relating to them in St. Matthew, St. Luke, and the Acts of the Apoſtles.

§ 20. All the males among the Jews were, by the law of Moſes ‡, commanded to repair thrice every year to Jeruſalem, " to appear," as it is expreſſed, " before the Lord;" viz. at the three great feaſts; the Paſſover, called alſo the feaſt of unleavened bread; the feaſt of the weeks, named Pentecoſt; and the Feaſt of Tabernacles. Each of theſe ſolemnities laſted a whole week. The apoſtles, therefore, and diſciples, who had come up to Jeruſalem from Galilee, their native country, not merely to attend upon their maſter, but in obedience to the above-cited law of Moſes, to keep the Paſſover, continued, as they were obliged to do, at Jeruſalem, till the end of that feſtival. And there Jeſus appeared to them a ſecond time (eight days after his firſt appearance), St. Thomas § being with them. The next appearance of Chriſt to any number of his diſciples together, was at the ſea of Tiberias, called alſo the ſea of Galilee; and this is expreſsly ſaid by St. John, " to be the third time that Jeſus " ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples, after that he was riſen from the " dead ‖;" from whence it is evident, that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee, mentioned by St. Matthew, was ſubſequent to this ſpoken of by St. John, and was alſo in a different place, on a mountain, whereas the latter was by the ſea of Tiberias. Three reaſons may be aſſigned for our Saviour's meeting his diſciples in Galilee. Galilee was the country in which he had reſided above thirty years, from his infancy to the time when he firſt began to preach the kingdom of God: there did he firſt begin to declare and evidence his miſſion by miracles, and in the cities of that region did he perform the greateſt part of his mighty works; ſo that he muſt neceſſarily have been more known, and have had more followers in that country, than in any other region of Judea. And therefore, one reaſon for his ſhewing himſelf in Galilee after he was riſen

* Matth. xxviii 16, 17. † Acts i. 4.—ii. 4. ‡ Exod. xxiii. 17. Deut. xvi. 16.
§ John xx. 26. ‖ John xxi. 14.

from

from the dead, ſeems to have been, that where he was perſonally known to ſo many people, he might have the greater number of competent witneſſes to his reſurrection. Accordingly, St. Paul tells us he was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once, which therefore, in all probability, happened at the mountain in Galilee, where St. Matthew ſays, Jeſus appointed his diſciples to meet him, as I have obſerved once before. 2dly, Galilee was alſo the native country of the greateſt part, if not of all the apoſtles and diſciples. There they dwelt and ſupported themſelves and families, ſome of them at leaſt, by mean and laborious occupations. So ſtrait and ſo neceſſitous a condition of life muſt needs have rendered a long abſence from their own homes highly inconvenient to them at that time eſpecially, when the barley harveſt, which always fell out about the time of the paſſover, was either begun, or upon the point of beginning. As ſoon, therefore, as the paſchal ſolemnity was over, which detained them neceſſarily at Jeruſalem for a whole week, it was natural to ſuppoſe that they would return into Galilee. Upon which ſuppoſition, our Saviour, before his death, promiſed, after he was riſen, "he would go before them into Galilee;" which remarkable expreſſion was again made * uſe of by the angel after his reſurrection, who bade the women tell his diſciples, that he [Jeſus] "would go before them into Galilee:" i. e. would be in Galilee before them, and would meet them there. Chriſt, indeed, afterwards commands them by the ſame women to go into Galilee, adding a promiſe, that they ſhould ſee him. But this command muſt not be underſtood to imply a ſuſpicion, that without theſe peremptory orders of their maſter, they would have continued at Jeruſalem, where, after the feſtival was over, they had nothing to do. It ought rather to be taken as a confirmation of his promiſe of meeting them in Galilee, and a ſtrong encouragement to them to depend upon the performance of it in the due place and ſeaſon. The time of their entering upon the apoſtolical office, of preaching the Goſpel to all the world, was not yet come; neither were they yet fully prepared or qualified for that important work, which, after they had once undertaken it, was to be not only the ſole employment of their lives, but the occaſion of their leaving their fathers, their children, their country, and their friends, to travel up and down the world, expoſed to hardſhips, dangers, perſecution, and death, in unknown and remote corners of the earth. Of all which their maſter had frequently forewarned them before his death, and particularly in that affectionate diſcourſe he held to them the night in which he was betrayed. To prepare them, therefore, by degrees for a ſtate of ſo much affliction and mortification, and to give them an opportunity of ſeeing and providing in the beſt manner, they were able, for their relations and families, to whom they were ſoon to bid adieu for ever, their gracious Lord, who knew how to indulge, becauſe he had himſelf felt the affections and infirmities of human nature,

* Mark xvi. 7.

and who *, by recommending his mother, even from the croſs, to the care of his beloved diſciple, had taught them what regards were due to thoſe tender ties of nature, not only permitted them to return into Galilee, but promiſed to meet them there, and did, in fact, meet them there, not only once, but ſeveral times, as may be inferred from what St. Luke ſays of his having ſhewn himſelf to them † "for forty days after his paſſion," compared with what St. John ſays of his appearance by the lake of Tiberias, which he expreſsly calls the "third time" that Chriſt ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples after his reſurrection. After this, St. Matthew ſpeaks of another appearance in Galilee, on "a mountain", where, adds he, "Jeſus had appointed his diſciples." When this appointment was made, there is no intimation given in any of the evangeliſts. If it was not at the appearance at the lake of Tiberias, which there is no reaſon to imagine it was, St. John ſaying nothing of any ſuch matter, it was probably at ſome other appearance in Galilee, between this laſt and that mentioned by St. Matthew. And as there was a great number of brethren preſent upon that occaſion, it is rational to conclude, that timely notice was given, as well of the day as of the place of meeting. But, however this might have been, I am perſuaded that the greateſt part of the appearances of Chriſt "for "the forty days after his paſſion" were in Galilee, ſince the reaſons that required the Apoſtles to return thither were as ſtrong for their continuing there, till the approach of the feaſt of Weeks or Pentecoſt ſhould call them back to Jeruſalem.

Another reaſon for meeting his diſciples in Galilee, and for concluding that the appearances mentioned in the Acts were chiefly in that country, and that there were many of them, may be deduced from what St. Luke ‡ tells us of the ſubjects upon which our Saviour ſpoke to his diſciples on theſe occaſions, viz. "Of things per-"taining to the kingdom of God." Before they ſet out upon the great work of preaching the kingdom of God to all the world, it was neceſſary that they ſhould be fully inſtructed in the doctrines they were to preach, and in the ſeveral functions of the apoſtolical office: that they ſhould thoroughly underſtand the intentions of their maſter, and have ſome view of the means and aſſiſtances by which they ſhould be enabled to perform a taſk ſo apparently above their abilities, and ſome hopes and encouragement to ſupport them under the proſpect of theſe difficulties and dangers they were given to expect in propagating the Goſpel. In order to all this, many inveterate prejudices relating to the law of Moſes and the Jewiſh nation were to be rooted out; the ſcheme of God in the univerſal redemption of mankind was to be laid open to them; many human affections, reluctances, and terrors, were to be ſubdued, and their hearts to be fortified with courage and conſtancy, a diſregard and contempt of hardſhips, perils, pain, and death. To theſe ſeveral purpoſes nothing could more conduce than fre-

* John xix. 26, 27. † Acts i. ‡ Acts, chap. i. 3.

quent

quent viſits from their Lord; whoſe reſurrection (of which every appearance was a freſh proof) was an unqueſtionable evidence of his power; whoſe every appearance was an inſtance of his affection and condeſcenſion to them, and of his fidelity in performing the promiſe he had made before his paſſion, of coming to them again after his death, and being with them for a "little while before he went "to his Father;" and whoſe fidelity and exactneſs, in thus performing his promiſe, was an infallible earneſt and ſecurity for the coming of that Comforter who was to ſupply his place, "to guide them in-"to all truth, to bring to their remembrance whatever he had "ſpoken to them, to enable them to do greater works than he had "done," and to fill their hearts "with that joy, which it ſhould "not be in the power of man to take from them." Add to this the weight and authority derived to his precepts and inſtructions from their being delivered by himſelf in perſon; and the great meaſure of ſtrength accruing to their faith, from their having frequently before their eyes the "captain of their ſalvation," who, after having fought with the powers of darkneſs, and triumphed over ſin and death, was to "ſit down thenceforth at the right-hand of God," inveſted with the power of aſſiſting thoſe who ſhould fight under his banner, and rewarding their toils, their ſufferings, and their death, with a crown of immortal life. And if nothing could more effectually bring about all theſe great effects than Chriſt's frequently meeting his Apoſtles, it will evidently appear that no place could be more proper for thoſe meetings than Galilee; if we conſider, that the Apoſtles, having their habitations in that country, might reſide there without any ſuſpicion, and aſſemble without any fear of the perſecutors and murderers of their maſter, the Chief Prieſts and the Roman Governor *: for Galilee was under the juriſdiction of Herod. Whereas, had they remained in Jeruſalem, and continued to aſſemble frequently together, while the report of their maſter's being riſen from the dead was freſh and in every body's mouth, the chief prieſts and elders, whoſe hatred or apprehenſions of Jeſus Chriſt were not extinguiſhed by his blood, as appears by their perſecuting and murdering his followers long after; theſe rulers of the Jews, I ſay, would undoubtedly have given ſuch interruptions to thoſe meetings, and thrown ſuch obſtacles in the way, as muſt have neceſſitated our Lord to interpoſe his miraculous power to prevent or remove them. Now, as all theſe inconveniencies might be avoided by our Saviour's meeting his diſciples in Galilee, it is more agreeable to the wiſdom of God ("which," as Mr. Locke obſerves †, "is not uſually at the expence of miracles, but "only in caſes that require them"), to ſuppoſe theſe frequent meetings to hve been in Galilee rather than in Jeruſalem, and more analogous to the proceeding of our Lord himſelf, who, being in danger from the Scribes and Phariſees, refrained from appearing publickly in Jeruſalem for ſome time before the hour appointed for

* Luke xxiii. 7. † Reaſ. of Chriſt. p. 508. fol. edit.

his ſufferings and death was come, and "walked in Galilee," as St. John * tells us, "for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe the "Jews ſought to kill him." From theſe conſiderations I think it clear, that all the appearances of Chriſt to his diſciples, from that to St. Thomas mentioned in St. John, to that laſt in Jeruſalem, on the day of his aſcending, mentioned by St. Luke both in his Goſpel and in the Acts, were in Galilee: from whence when the Apoſtles returned afterwards to Jeruſalem, they were covered from the apprehenſions of giving any umbrage by reſiding there, for the ſhort ſpace to come between their return and the time of their entering upon their apoſtolical office, by the obligation they were under, in common with the reſt of their brethren the Jews, to repair to that city for the celebration of the feaſt of † Weeks, called alſo Pentecoſt: upon the moſt ſolemn day of which feſtival they were, according to the promiſe of their maſter, filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and endued with power from above to defy all danger, and ſurmount all oppoſition in preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt.

And hence we learn, that all the latter part of the 24th chapter of St. Luke's goſpel, from the 49th verſe to the end incluſive, relates to what happened at Jeruſalem, &c. after the return of the apoſtles from Galilee: of whoſe departure into Galilee after the reſurrection of Chriſt, or of his promiſe of going thither before them, this evangeliſt, having not thought it to his purpoſe to make any mention, thought it as needleſs to ſay any thing of their leaving Jeruſalem; ſince the ſcene of their laſt appearance, as well as of the former related by him, was in that city; and ſince to thoſe, who by any other means ſhould come to be acquainted with the whole hiſtory of our Saviour, there would be no danger of confounding thoſe two appearances. As to thoſe, who ſhould happen to meet with no other account but his goſpel (if ſuch a thing could be ſuppoſed), no great damage could ariſe from their miſtaking them to be one and the ſame.

§ 21. By this long and ſcrupulous examination of the ſeveral particulars, which conſtitute the evidence of the reſurrection, I have endeavoured to ſhew, that "never were there any facts that could "better abide the teſt." And, if I have in any degree ſucceeded in my endeavours, I ſhall neither repent my own labour, nor apologize to the reader for having dwelt ſo long upon this ſubject: ſince the concluſion that will inevitably follow from this propoſition is, that "never was there a fact more fully proved than the reſurrection "of Jeſus Chriſt." For, beſides the teſtimony of ſome, who may be ſuppoſed to have had no prejudices either for or againſt the reſurrection, I mean the Roman ſoldiers, who reported that his ſepulchre was miraculouſly opened by an angel, or a divinity (for ſo they muſt have ſtyled that cœleſtical apparition); and beſides the teſtimony of others, who were apparently prepoſſeſſed with notions contrary to the belief of Chriſt's being riſen from the dead, and yet affirmed that they were not only told by angels that he was

* John vii. 1. † Acts ii. 1. &c.

riſen,

riſen, but that they themſelves had ſeen him, talked with him, and handled him; beſides this human teſtimony, I ſay, which, conſidering all the circumſtances attending it, muſt be allowed to have been ſufficient to prove any event that was not either impoſſible or improbable in the higeſt degree, there were (as it was reaſonable to expect there ſhould be) other evidences as extraordinary and miraculous as the reſurrection itſelf. Of this kind are the predictions contained in the writings of Moſes, the Prophets, and the Pſalmiſt; ſetting forth the deſign and purpoſe of God to redeem mankind by the righteouſneſs, ſufferings, death, and reſurrection of the "ſeed "of the woman." Without the reſurrection, this great ſcheme of divine mercy had been uncomplete; by that it was perfected, and the triumph over death added to that over ſin; the Meſſiah thereby accompliſhing all that the Scriptures foretold of his glory and power. When therefore one part of the promiſes relating to Jeſus had been ſo exactly made good in his life and death, it is reaſonable to conclude, that God did not fail to fulfill the others in his reſurrection.

In the ſame claſs of evidence may alſo be ranked the prophecies of Jeſus himſelf, relating to his riſing from the dead, which coming from one, whoſe other predictions (of which there had been many) had been always accompliſhed, deſerved to be credited no leſs than the others, and were not only verified by the event itſelf, but confirmed by other ſubſequent events, foretold likewiſe by him before his paſſion, and linked with and depending upon that great proof of his divine power. Such, for inſtance, were his meeting his diſciples in Galilee, his being with them a little while before he went to his Father, his aſcenſion into heaven, and his ſending unto them the promiſed Comforter, with all the glorious faculties and powers they received upon his coming. With ſo various, ſo aſtoniſhing, ſo well-connected and irrefragable a chain of evidence, is this important article of the reſurrection bound up and fortified.

But all theſe proofs were not exhibited to all the Jews, for "not "to all the people was Jeſus ſhewn" alive after his paſſion, but "to "witneſſes choſen before of God; to us" (ſaith St. Peter) "who "did eat and drink with him after that he aroſe from the dead *." That Chriſt made choice of a ſelect number of diſciples, and particularly of twelve (who were called apoſtles), to be witneſſes of the great actions of his life, and eſpecially of his reſurrection, and preachers of his goſpel to all the world, is a thing too well known to need any proof. To qualify them for this double office, he not only, upon many occaſions both before and after his crucifixion, diſcourſed to them in particular "of the things pertaining to the "kingdom of God," and poured upon them all the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, but gave them every kind of evidence of his being riſen from the dead, which the moſt ſcrupulous and ſceptical could imagine or require; "ſhewing himſelf alive" to them "by many "infallible proofs," ſuch as eating and drinking with them, &c.

* Acts x. 41.

" for forty days after his paſſion." And, indeed, it is highly expedient that thoſe, upon whoſe teſtimony and credit the truth of any fact is to be eſtabliſhed, ſhould have the fulleſt and moſt unexceptionable evidence of it, that can be had; becauſe their having had all poſſible means of information muſt needs add great weight and authority to their depoſitions. Hence then we may learn the reaſon of our Saviour's appearing ſo often to his diſciples after his reſurrection, of his requiring them to handle him, and ſee that it was he himſelf, of his eating and drinking with them, of his referring them to the Scriptures, to his own predictions, and to the teſtimony of thoſe to whom he had appeared before he came to them; and, laſtly, of his ſatisfying the unreaſonable ſcruples of St. Thomas, who being one of the choſen witneſſes (one of the twelve), it was proper he ſhould have an equal knowledge of the fact he was to atteſt with his other brethren the apoſtles. That this perfect knowledge of the things, they were to give teſtimony to, was neceſſary for thoſe who were ordained to be apoſtles, is farther evident from the following words of St. Peter *; who, after the aſcenſion of our Lord, propoſing to the reſt of the diſciples to fill up the vacancy made by the tranſgreſſion and death of Judas, by electing one to take part with them in their miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, deſcribes the qualifications requiſite in an apoſtle, by limiting their choice in theſe words: " Wherefore of theſe men, that have accompanied with us all the " time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out amongſt us, beginning " from the baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day that he was taken " up from us, muſt one be ordained to be witneſs with us of his " reſurrection." Hence alſo it is plain, that all theſe infallible proofs were not vouchſafed by Chriſt to his diſciples merely out of a particular favour and regard to them, that they might believe and be ſaved; but with a farther view, that others alſo through their teſtimony, founded on the completeſt and exacteſt information, might likewiſe believe and be ſaved. The reproof of Chriſt to St. Thomas, for not believing without the atteſtation of his ſenſes, implied in the bleſſing pronounced by him on thoſe, " who having not ſeen had " yet believed," is a clear argument, that our Saviour thought his diſciples had ſufficient cauſe to believe he was riſen from the dead, even before he ſhewed himſelf to them. And that they had ſo in fact, I have above endeavoured to prove; and that St. John did believe, before he ſaw his maſter, he himſelf aſſures us. Had Chriſt, therefore, intended nothing more than to bring his diſciples to a belief of his reſurrection, he might have left them to the teſtimony of the Roman ſoldiers; to that of the women; to the writings of Moſes and the Prophets; to his own predictions; to the ſtate of the ſepulchre, and that wonderful circumſtance of his body's being no where to be found; to all this evidence he might, I ſay, have left them, without appearing to them himſelf, and left them without excuſe, had they ſtill continued faithleſs and unbelieving. But though the apoſtles had upon this evidence believed their maſter to

* Acts i. 15—26.

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be riſen from the dead; yet, without thoſe other infallible proofs mentioned by St. Luke, they would certainly have not been ſo well qualified for witneſſes of the reſurrection to all the world; that is to ſay, the reaſons upon which they believed would not have appeared ſo convincing. The Heathens would not have admitted the teſtimony of Moſes and the Prophets; of whoſe writings they knew nothing, and of whoſe divine authority they had no proof. And as to the depoſitions of the women, beſides that they were ſtrangers to their characters, they might, from Chriſt's appearing to them, with ſome colour have demanded why he did not appear likewiſe to thoſe whom he commiſſioned to preach his goſpel, and to be witneſſes of his reſurrection. But when, on the contrary, the apoſtles could tell them that they themſelves had ſeen Chriſt, had handled him, eat and drank with him, and converſed with him for forty days after that he was riſen from the dead, they could not but allow them to have had the fulleſt evidence of the reſurrection, ſuppoſing what they told them to be true; and of this, the purity of their doctrine, the holineſs of their lives, their courage and conſtancy in defying and undergoing all kinds of hardſhips, dangers, pain, and death, in advancing a cauſe which every worldly intereſt obliged them to deſert, joined to the atteſtation of the Holy Spirit, "working with "them, and confirming the word with ſigns following," were ſuch aſſurances as no other man could give of his veracity.

From what has been ſaid, it may appear, how little ground there is for the cavils that have been raiſed upon our Lord's forbidding Mary Magdalene to "touch him;" and upon his not ſhewing himſelf, after he was riſen, to the Jews, to the chief prieſts and elders, to the Scribes and Phariſees: the one of which has been interpreted as a refuſal to Mary Magdalene, of the neceſſary evidence of his being riſen from the dead; and the other as a breach of the promiſe, implied in theſe words, "* An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh "after a ſign, and there ſhall be no ſign given to it, but the ſign of "the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights "in the whale's belly, ſo ſhall the ſon of man," &c. In which (it is ſaid) Chriſt promiſed to appear, after he was riſen, to that "evil and adulterous generation," that is, to the Jews, &c. as contra-diſtinguiſhed from his diſciples and apoſtles. That Chriſt promiſed by theſe words to give that "evil generation" ſufficient proof of his riſing from the grave after having lain in it three days, I readily allow; but that he promiſed to appear to them, I abſolutely deny, and think it impoſſible to prove he did, from the above-cited paſſage. Of his riſing again from the grave on the third day, the Jews had the teſtimony of the prophets, of the predictions of Chriſt himſelf, the evidence of the Roman ſoldiers, of his body's being no where to be found, of the women and diſciples, and apoſtles, to whom he had appeared, and who, before the Sanhedrim, bore witneſs to his reſurrection, and, having juſt before wrought a miracle upon a † lame man, declared that they had done it in the name of

* Matth. xii. 39, 40. † Acts. iv. 10.

"Jeſus

" Jeſus of Nazareth, whom," ſay they, " ye crucified, whom God " raiſed from the dead." This ſurely was evidence ſufficient to convince any reaſonable and unprejudiced perſon; and, conſequently, to acquit our Lord of the promiſe of giving that " evil generation" ſatisfactory proofs of his being riſen from the dead. To the evidence vouchſafed by Chriſt, either out of favour to thoſe " who " had forſaken all and followed him;" or to thoſe whom he had choſen to be " witneſſes of him to all the world," they certainly could have no juſt pretenſions; who, inſtead of being his diſciples, had rejected his doctrine, and put him to death as an impoſtor and blaſphemer; and, inſtead of ſhewing any diſpoſition to embrace or propagate his goſpel, oppoſed it with all their power; and by threats and puniſhments forbade his apoſtles to preach any more in his name. That Mary Magdalene was convinced that it was Jeſus who appeared to her, I have already ſhewn very fully; and that was all that was neceſſary for her ſingle ſelf; ſuppoſing, therefore, that ſhe never had afterwards the permiſſion of touching or embracing her maſter (which by the way cannot be proved); neither had ſhe, nor any one elſe, reaſon to complain or cavil, ſince neither her own faith, nor that of any other perſon, depended upon her having that proof of the reſurrection of Chriſt; for ſhe was not an apoſtle, not one of the " choſen witneſſes." And it is very remarkable, that none of the apoſtles, either in preaching to the unconverted Jews or Gentiles, or in their epiſtles to the church, ever make any mention of the appearances of Chriſt to the women: and the evangeliſts ſeem to have related them only upon account of their being connected with other more important parts of the hiſtory of the reſurrection. The truth is, the teſtimony of the women, though of great weight with the apoſtles, and with thoſe who received it from their own mouths, was but ſecond-hand hear-ſay evidence to thoſe who had it only from the apoſtles' report; who, for that reaſon, inſiſted always upon their having themſelves ſeen their maſter, " after that he was riſen " from the dead;" a circumſtance, as far as I can recollect, not omitted by any of them, in their arguments upon the reſurrection of Jeſus; as may be ſeen in the paſſages of Scripture that give any particular account of thoſe diſcourſes. And thus St. Paul *, in his Epiſtle to the Corinthians, after enumerating many appearances of Chriſt to the twelve apoſtles, and others, cloſes all with ſaying, " And laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo." So much care did they take to give reaſonable evidence for the reaſonable faith they required.

§ 22. All that has hitherto been ſaid relates chiefly to the proofs of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, as they were laid before the apoſtles, thoſe " choſen witneſſes" of that great and aſtoniſhing event. And I hope, upon a ſerious and attentive view of the fair and unimpoſing manner in which thoſe proofs were offered to their conſideration, and of the number and certainty of the facts upon which they were grounded, every judicious and candid enquirer af-

* 1 Cor. xv. 8.

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ter truth will allow, that, to the apoſtles at leaſt, the reſurrection of Jeſus was moſt fully and moſt unexceptionably proved. I ſhall now proceed to lay before the reader ſome arguments (for I cannot enter into all) that may induce us, who live at ſo remote a diſtance of time from that age of evidence and miracles, to believe that Chriſt roſe from the dead.

The firſt and principal argument is the teſtimony of thoſe choſen witneſſes, tranſmitted down in writing, either penned by themſelves, or authorized by their inſpection and approbation.

The ſecond, is the exiſtence of the Chriſtian religion.

Before we admit the teſtimony of theſe "choſen witneſſes" contained in the Goſpels, the Acts, the Epiſtles, and the Revelations, it may be proper to conſider, in the firſt place, what reaſons there are for our believing this teſtimony to be genuine; or, in other words, believing them to be the authors of thoſe books, which are now received under their names: and, in the next place, what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to this teſtimony, ſuppoſing it genuine.

To prove the apoſtles * and evangeliſts to be the authors of thoſe Scriptures which are now received under their names, we have the concurrent atteſtation of all the earlieſt writers of the church, deduced by an uninterrupted and uncontrolled tradition, from the very times of the apoſtles. Which is ſuch an authentication of theſe ſacred records, as is not to be overturned by bare preſumptions, and a ſurmiſed and unproved charge of forgery. But for the proofs of this propoſition, I ſhall refer the reader to the † diſcourſes of thoſe learned men, who have treated more particularly upon this ſubject, and ſhall content myſelf with offering in ſupport of thoſe proofs the following conſiderations; in which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, 1ſt, The probability of the apoſtles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of the religion they preached, and of their diſciples having preſerved and tranſmitted thoſe writings to poſterity: 2dly, The improbability of any books forged in the names of the apoſtles eſcaping detection.

Firſt, If the precepts and examples of Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles were to be the rules, by which all thoſe, who in ſucceeding ages ſhould believe in him, were required to govern themſelves, it ſeems moſt conſonant to the wiſdom of God, becauſe agreeable to what

* I uſe theſe two words Apoſtles and Evangeliſts in this place, to denote and diſtinguiſh the authors of the four Goſpels, the Acts, and the Epiſtles, &c. though they might all have been comprehended under the general term Apoſtles, by which title not only the twelve, ſo called by Chriſt himſelf, but Matthias afterwards and Paul, and all the ſeventy or ſeventy-two diſciples, are mentioned by ſome of the fathers. Of this laſt number were the evangeliſts Mark and Luke (as Dr. Whitby has ſhewn from Origen and Epiphanius), and as ſuch were qualified by their own perſonal knowledge of moſt of the facts, and by the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, to write their goſpels, without the inſpection of the two great apoſtles Peter and Paul, which yet (as we are told by ſome of the fathers) was a farther authority given to them, and ſuch as would have ſufficed though they had not been themſelves particularly inſpired.

† See Dr. Whitby's Preſatory Diſcourſes to his Annotations upon the Goſpels, Acts, &c. See alſo L'Abbadie de la Religion Chrétienne, tom. II.

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he himſelf practiſed when he gave the law to the Iſraelties, to commit thoſe rules of ſalvation to writing, rather than to the unſure and treacherous conveyance of oral tradition; which cannot with any ſafety be depended upon for ſcarce ſo much as one or two generations. It is, therefore, highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe that the ſame Spirit, which incited and enabled the apoſtles to preach the goſpel, and bear witneſs to the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt in every nation of the known world, ſhould likewiſe incite and enable them to deliver down to poſterity, in a method the leaſt liable to uncertainty and error, that teſtimony, and thoſe precepts, upon which the faith and practice of after-times were to be eſtabliſhed, eſpecially when it is (in the ſecond place) conſidered, that all revelation (revelation I mean of the doctrines and ſyſtem of the goſpel) was confined to the apoſtles, and conſequently ended with them. The power of working miracles, ſpeaking with other tongues, caſting out unclean ſpirits, &c. was frequently, if not univerſally, given to the firſt converts to Chriſtianity; and ſome of theſe gifts were continued for many generations in the church. But to the apoſtles only was our Saviour pleaſed to reveal his will. Accordingly in the epiſtles of St. Paul * we ſee that thoſe Chriſtians, who were endowed with many and various gifts of the Holy Spirit, ſtood however in need of the inſtructions and directions of that apoſtle, in many points both of faith and practice; and the earlieſt writers after the apoſtles, though poſſeſſed themſelves of many of thoſe miraculous powers, inſtead of pretending to immediate revelation, have upon all occaſions recourſe to the Holy Scriptures, which they acknowledge to have been written by the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, as to that fountain, from whence alone they could derive the waters of life: both which appeals, as well that made to the apoſtles by their contemporaries, as thoſe made by ſucceeding Chriſtians to the Scriptures, would have been unneceſſary, had they, like the apoſtles, been taught all things by revelation, and been guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit.

This being the caſe with thoſe Chriſtians who were converted to the faith by the preaching of the apoſtles themſelves, and who were to tranſmit to ſucceeding ages that goſpel upon which, according to their belief, the ſalvation of mankind depended; is it not natural to imagine they would take the moſt effectual means to ſupply thoſe defects which they were ſenſible of in themſelves, and to guard againſt thoſe errors which, through the imbecillity of the human mind, they had fallen into, even while the voices of the apoſtles ſtill ſounded in their ears, and to which their poſterity muſt of neceſſity be ſtill more liable? And what more effectual means could they purſue, than either to obtain in writing, from the apoſtles themſelves, the evidence and doctrines of the Chriſtian faith, or, which amounted to much the ſame thing, to write them down from their mouths, or under their inſpection and approbation; or, laſtly, to tranſcribe from their own memories what they could recollect of the

* See particularly the Epiſtles to the Corinthians.

doctrines

doctrines and inſtructions of the apoſtles? Of theſe three methods, the two firſt were unqueſtionably the beſt; the laſt was ſubject to many imperfections and miſtakes; for though our Saviour promiſed to enable his apoſtles, by the Holy Spirit, "to call to mind "whatever he had ſaid unto them," I do not find, that the memories of thoſe who heard the apoſtles were ever aſſiſted in the like miraculous manner. If the apoſtles, therefore, had not, either from their care for the "houſhold of faith," or from the ſuggeſtions of the Holy Spirit, tranſmitted the proofs and doctrines of the goſpel to poſterity in one of the two firſt-mentioned ways, it is to be preſumed they would have been called upon to do it by thoſe who looked upon them as teachers commiſſioned and inſpired by the Spirit of Truth, and "who alone had the words of eternal life." And if neither of thoſe two deſirable things could have been obtained, recourſe would undoubtedly have been had to the laſt. And, indeed, it is evident, from St. Luke's preface to his goſpel, that many writings of this kind were current among the Chriſtians of thoſe times; none of which, that I know of, having come down to us, it is to be preſumed they were ſuperſeded by writings of greater authority; that is to ſay, writings either penned by the apoſtles themſelves, or authorized by their inſpection and approbation; becauſe this ſeems to be the beſt account that can be given for the different fate that hath attended theſe ſeveral writings; the former having diſappeared and died ſoon after their birth; and the latter having ſurvived now almoſt ſeventeen centuries, in the ſame degree of eſteem and veneration with which they were at firſt received by the converts of the apoſtolic age: for that the difference between theſe writings was made in that age is very probable; 1ſt, becauſe thoſe very contemporaries of the apoſtles ſtood themſelves in need of their inſtructions, admonitions, and exhortations, for their own direction and encouragement: and, 2dly, for the conviction of the next age, who were to receive the goſpel from their hands, they wanted the teſtimony and authority of thoſe perſons, to whom the facts upon which their faith depended were the moſt completely proved; and who alone, in matters of doctrine, were "guided into "all truth" by the infallible "Spirit of God." For by their own evidence they could prove no more than what fell within the compaſs of their own knowledge, which could extend no farther than to what they had themſelves ſeen of the apoſtles, or heard from their mouths: and this evidence of theirs could acquire no farther authority by having been committed to writing. The apoſtles alone could prove, what they only knew, and were the only authentic preachers of thoſe doctrines, which they alone received from Chriſt, or after his aſcenſion from the Holy Spirit. Their ſucceſſors, beſides bearing teſtimony to their characters, and giving evidence perhaps of ſome collateral facts which had fallen under their own obſervations, could do no more than "witneſs their depoſitions;" that is, that theſe and theſe were the facts, and theſe and theſe were the doctrines delivered by the apoſtles. If the apoſtles, therefore,

either from the ſecret inſtigation of the Holy Ghoſt, or from their paternal care and affection for "the houſhold of faith," or at the requeſt of their "children in Chriſt Jeſus," did commit to writing the proofs and doctrines of the Chriſtian religion (as it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe they did), it is as reaſonable to conclude, that what they either writ or approved muſt neceſſarily have been preferred to all other writings whatever.

And as the writings of the apoſtles muſt, for the reaſons abovementioned, have been of great weight and importance to the Chriſtians of their times; and of ſtill greater to thoſe of the ſucceeding ages, who could not, like their predeceſſors, upon any occaſion, have recourſe to the living and infallible oracles of God; it is natural to imagine that the perſons, in whoſe hands thoſe ſacred and invaluable treaſures were depoſited, would preſerve and guard them with the utmoſt fidelity and care; would impart copies of them to ſuch of their brethren who could not have acceſs to the originals; and would, from the ſame principle of Chriſtian benevolence and fidelity, ſee that thoſe copies were tranſcribed with all that exactneſs which human nature, ever liable to ſlips and errors, was capable of. The ſame care, under the ſame allowances, it is to be ſuppoſed, would be alſo taken by thoſe who ſhould tranſlate them into the ſeveral languages ſpoken by Chriſtians of different nations, who did not underſtand that in which the apoſtles wrote.

Theſe ſeveral ſteps appear to me ſo natural and obvious, that I cannot but think any ſet of reaſonable and honeſt men could not fail of making them, under the ſame circumſtances as attended the firſt preachers and converts of Chriſtianity. And from hence ariſes a ſtrong preſumption in favour of thoſe accounts which inform us,—that the apoſtles and evangeliſts were the genuine authors of thoſe writings, which are now received under their names.—That although many, even in the apoſtles times, "had taken in hand," as St. Luke expreſſes it, "to ſet forth in order a declaration of thoſe things which were "moſt ſurely believed amongſt Chriſtians, even as they delivered "them, who were eye-witneſſes and miniſters of the word;" and although, ſome years after the death of the apoſtles, many goſpels, epiſtles, &c. appeared, which were aſcribed to them, to the Virgin Mary, and even to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; yet thoſe only, which we now account canonical, were admitted as ſuch from the very earlieſt ages of Chriſtianity.—That theſe canonical books were preſerved and kept, with the moſt ſcrupulous and religious care, by the ſeveral churches or ſocieties of Chriſtians, who did not, and indeed upon their principles could not preſume to add to them, or to take from them the leaſt tittle—That copies of them were immediately diſperſed throughout the whole Chriſtian world; "the apoſtles" (ſaith Irenæus, lib. 3. l. 1.) "firſt preaching the Goſpel, and afterwards, by the will "of God, delivering it to us in the Scriptures, to be thenceforward "the pillar and foundation of our faith. And the firſt ſucceſſors of "the apoſtles, (as Euſebius informs us, Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. iii. C. 37.) "leaving their countries, preached to them who had not heared of "the

" the Chriſtian faith, and then delivered to them, as the foundation " of their faith, the writings of the holy evangeliſts."—That the originals of the epiſtles were ſtill preſerved in the reſpective churches to which they were directed in the time of Tertullian, who, writing to the hereticks of his age, viz. of the third century, bids them " go " to the apoſtolical churches, where the authentick epiſtles of the " Apoſtles (ſaith he) are ſtill recited."—That, laſtly, tranſlations of theſe Scriptures were made ſo early as to precede the general admiſſion of ſome parts of them, which were afterwards received as genuine; the Syriac verſion for inſtance being ſo antient, that it leaves out the ſecond epiſtle of Peter, the ſecond and third epiſtle of John, and the Revelations, as being for a time controverted in ſome of the eaſtern churches; which, by the way, ſhews how ſcrupulous the firſt Chriſtians were about admitting into the canon of Scripture writings which, though bearing the names of the apoſtles, and received by ſome churches as genuine, were yet queſtioned and ſuſpected by others. To all which we may add ſtill farther, that theſe ſeveral accounts relating merely to facts tend only to eſtabliſh another fact, viz. that the apoſtles and evangeliſts did compoſe the Goſpels, Epiſtles, &c. aſcribed to them, which fact is capable of being proved by the ſame kind of evidence as any other fact of the ſame nature.—That the evidences of this fact cannot be overturned but upon ſuch principles as will equally ſubvert the proofs of all facts that exiſted at any great diſtance of time from the preſent.—That we ought therefore either to admit this fact, to reject all thoſe without diſtinction which ſtand only upon the credit of hiſtories and records, of the truth of any of which we can have no ſtronger aſſurances than we have of the authenticity of theſe holy writings *.

§ 23. The next point to be conſidered, is the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apoſtles eſcaping detection.

The reaſons given under the foregoing article, to ſhew the probability of the apoſtles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of Chriſtianity, and of their diſciples having preſerved and tranſmitted thoſe writings to their ſucceſſors, will lead us to diſcover the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apoſtles eſcaping detection. For if it was neceſſary for the Chriſtians, even of the apoſtolick age, to have in writing the directions and inſtructions of the apoſtles in many points both of faith and practice, as is evident it was from almoſt all the epiſtles, it was as neceſſary for them to be aſſured, that what was delivered to them in the name of an apoſtle was certainly of his inditing. And this was to be known many ways; for ſurely we may have undoubted proofs of ſuch a one's being the author of ſuch a book or letter, without having ſeen him write it with his own hand, or having heard from his own mouth that he wrote it. " The apoſtles (ſaith Irenæus), having firſt preached " the Goſpel, delivered it afterwards to us in the Scriptures." Now,

* The reader, who is inclined to ſee the authorities upon which theſe ſeveral articles were founded, may conſult Whitby's preface to the Goſpels, &c.

as we have no reaſon to believe, from any accounts that can be depended upon, that any of thoſe ſtyled apoſtles, beſides the * ſix whoſe works we now have, left any thing in writing, if theſe words of Irenæus be taken to relate to the whole number of the apoſtles, it will follow from them that even thoſe apoſtles, who wrote nothing themſelves, did yet deliver to their children in Chriſt ſuch parts of the Scriptures as had come to their hands. In which caſe thoſe Scriptures, thus delivered and recommended by the apoſtle, muſt have been allowed to have the ſame authority, as if they had been written by that apoſtle himſelf; ſince he, as well as his brethren who wrote them, was under the inſpiration and guidance of that Holy Spirit, who, according to the promiſe of Chriſt, was to "lead them into all "truth;" and therefore could not be ignorant whether the matters contained in thoſe Scriptures were true or falſe. But if the general term "apoſtles" be limited to ſuch of them only as compoſed the writings called by Irenæus "the Scriptures;" the meaning of his words will be, that the apoſtles, when they had preached the Goſpel, (i. e. the whole ſyſtem of facts and doctrines, which it was neceſſary for Chriſtians to know and believe), committed it to writing for the uſe of the churches, to ſerve thenceforward, as he expreſſes it, for the "pillar and foundation" of their faith in Chriſt Jeſus. Thoſe churches therefore were the proper evidences to prove the apoſtles to be the authors of thoſe writings, which they received from them. And the teſtimony they gave to that matter of fact, as, on the one hand, it does not appear to have been liable to any ſuſpicion of fraud; ſo, on the other, it ſeems equally free from any probability of error, or miſinformation. For they muſt have had certain knowledge of the character and credit of the perſons who delivered thoſe writings to them in the name of any of the apoſtles †, and many other indubitable proofs, both external and internal, to convince them of their being genuine, or to diſcover the falſehood if they were not. Allowing, for inſtance, the epiſtles, which now paſs under the name of St. Paul, to have been received during his life by the churches to which they were directed, there are in all of them many circumſtances by which they might certainly have known him to be the author. Theſe circumſtances the reader, if he has either received or written any letters of buſineſs to or from his acquaintance and friends, may eaſily ſuggeſt to himſelf, and may as eaſily diſcover them upon peruſing thoſe epiſtles. But it will, nay it muſt, be ſaid by thoſe who deny theſe Scriptures to have been written by the apoſ-

* Theſe ſix are Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, and Jude. Mark and Luke, though ſuppoſed with good reaſon to be of the number of the ſeventy-two diſciples, were not apoſtles, in the ſtrict and limited ſenſe of that word.

† Thus Tychicus, mentioned by St. Paul in his epiſtle to the Epheſians, as ſent by him, and moſt probably the bearer of that epiſtle and of that to the Coloſſians ‡; where he is alſo mentioned as ſent to them by that apoſtle, together with Oneſimus; Tychicus, I ſay, and Oneſimus, were doubtleſs able to give ſuch proofs of St. Paul's being the author of thoſe two epiſtles, as the Chriſtians of thoſe nations muſt have been ſatisfied with, could it be ſuppoſed that they wanted other reaſons to convince them of it; but this ſuppoſition, I believe, no one will think it reaſonable to make.

‡ Chap. iv. 7, 8, 9.

tles

tles, whose names they bear, that they were forged after their deaths, and consequently could not have been received by the churches during their lives. This, doubtless, infidels will say, (for what else can they pretend?). But I am at a loss to think how they can support their assertion, since not only the testimony of all the earliest writers of the church, but common sense itself, is against them. For can it be imagined that the Corinthians, for example, would have received as genuine an epistle not delivered to them till after the death of the apostle whose name it bore, and yet appearing, from any circumstances therein mentioned, to have been written several years before, unless such an extraordinary delay was very satisfactorily accounted for? Is it not to be presumed, that, in a matter of such importance, not only to themselves, but to all Christians, they would have demanded of the person, who first produced it, how he came by it? How he knew it was written by St. Paul, and address'd to them? Why it was not sent at the time it was written, especially as it was evident, upon the face of the epistle itself, that it was written upon occasion of some disturbances and irregularities crept into that church, and in answer to some questions proposed to that apostle, which required a speedy reformation and reply? These questions, and many more which the particulars referred to in the epistle must have suggested, the Chrinthians would in common prudence have asked; and, if the impostor could not (as it is most reasonable to conclude he could not) return a satisfactory answer to those questions, can we believe the Corinthians would have admitted, upon his bare word, or even upon probable presumptions, an epistle which, if they acknowledged it to have been written by St. Paul, they must thenceforward have regarded as the infallible rule of their faith and practice? This is supposing that the first Christians (as their candid adversaries are indeed apt to suppose) acted with much less wisdom and circumspection, than any men would now act upon any momentous affair in ordinary life. And let it not be forgotten, that Christianity, at its first appearance in the world, very deeply affected the temporal concerns of its professors. The profession of Christianity did not then, as it does now in some parts of the world, intitle men to, and qualify them for, honour and preferments. Christians, upon barely confessing themselves such, were many times, without any crime alledged, put immediately to death; all the advantages they reapt from a life of faith and virtue were the peace of a quiet conscience here, and the hopes of a blessed immortality hereafter. The professing Christianity therefore was a matter of temporal deliberation. And why is it more reasonable to imagine that the people of those ages would give up all their worldly views and interests, without being convinced that it was worth their while to do it, than it is to imagine that a man in his senses, either of this or any past age, would without a valuable consideration surrender his estate to a stranger, and leave himself a beggar? I say this to those people who seem to consider all the primitive Christians either as fools or knaves, enthusiasts or impostors; without being able to assign any reason for their opinion, but that

there have been fools and knaves, enthuſiaſts and impoſtors, among the profeſſors of all religions whatſoever. But in order to prove a man a fool, or an enthuſiaſt, for embracing this or that religion, it will be neceſſary to ſhew, in the firſt place, that he took up his faith without duly examining the principles or facts upon which it is founded; that his faith was not properly deducible from thoſe facts or principles, or that thoſe principles and facts were in themſelves abſurd and falſe. Theſe points, I ſay, are not to be preſumed, but proved. And, with regard to the queſtion now under conſideration, unleſs it is proved by poſitive and undeniable evidence, that the Scriptures upon which the Chriſtians, who lived immediately after the times of the apoſtles, built their faith, were either forged or falſified (that is, forged in part), it cannot, I apprehend, be fairly concluded, that they acted like fools or madmen, in "forſaking all, and taking "up the croſs of Chriſt." Let this point be once proved, and it will readily be allowed that they took up their faith without due examination; ſince it muſt be owned, that if we, at this diſtance, are able to diſcover the forgery, they, who lived at the very time when thoſe writings firſt appeared, could not have wanted the means of detecting it, had they thought proper to make uſe of them. For as it is evident from the teſtimonies of the oldeſt Chriſtian writers, ſome of whom lived very near the times of the apoſtles themſelves, that theſe Scriptures were cited, read, and generally received as genuine, by the Chriſtians of their age, and even before, they muſt have been forged, either in the life-time of the apoſtles, or very ſoon after their deaths. That they were forged and generally received as authentick, while the apoſtles were yet living, nobody, I imagine, will venture to aſſert, who conſiders the many circumſtances and facts therein related concerning the apoſtles themſelves, and numberleſs other people then living, any one of which being falſified muſt have utterly deſtroyed the pretence of their having been compoſed by an apoſtle, whom ſome of thoſe Scriptures affirmed to have been under the guidance and inſpiration of the Spirit of Truth. If they were forged and publiſhed ſoon after the deaths of the apoſtles, there was ſtill great danger of the fraud's being detected, if not by many living witneſſes, yet by ſuch a tradition of facts and doctrines, whether oral or written, as, if it had been found to claſh with that ſuppoſed Goſpel or epiſtle, muſt have rendered its authenticity ſuſpected, unleſs ſupported by better evidence than the bare name of an apoſtle prefixed to it. And if it could be ſuppoſed that the bare name of an apoſtle was, in thoſe times, of weight ſufficient to eſtabliſh the authority of any writing, though otherwiſe liable to ſuſpicion, how came it to paſs that thoſe cunning impoſtors, who wrote the Goſpels of Mark and Luke, did not publiſh them under the venerable and all-ſanctifying names of the apoſtles? If theſe Scriptures therefore were forged and publiſhed in either of the above-mentioned periods (and, for the reaſons before given, the forgery could not have been of a later date) it is highly improbable, that the impoſture ſhould have eſcaped detection; and, had it been detected, it is equally improbable, that Chriſtians, who

ſtaked their all upon the truth of the Goſpel, ſhould receive as genuine, and acknowledge as divinely inſpired, writings which were known or even ſuſpected to be forged. But it will perhaps be urged, that the cheat was diſcovered and known only by a few of the wiſer ſort, who for the advancement of a good cauſe, thinking it at leaſt a venial ſin, a fraud which might even be ſtyled pious, to impoſe upon their weaker brethren, recommended to them, under the name of an apoſtle, a religious treatiſe, which tended only to improve their piety, and ſtrengthen their faith. But this ſuſpicion will appear as groundleſs and improbable as any of the former, if it be conſidered that the abettors, as well as the authors of the forgery, muſt have been Chriſtians (Chriſtians, I mean, as contra-diſtinguiſhed from Jews, Heathens, and Hereticks), and men of capacities and knowledge ſuperior to the vulgar. As Chriſtians, they could not, in thoſe ages of perſecution, have any worldly intereſt in promoting the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and therefore could have no motive to induce them to impoſe upon their brethren, but a perſuaſion that it was lawful at leaſt to "do evil, that good might come on it:" a principle which, as men of parts and knowledge, they could not but be ſenſible was unworthy of a diſciple of the Lord of truth and righteouſneſs, and which is expreſsly condemned in the epiſtle to the Romans *; which epiſtle therefore cannot be ſuppoſed to have been forged by men who acknowledged that principle, and proceeded upon it. Beſides, as far the greater number of the books of Scripture contain facts, as well as precepts and doctrines, theſe impoſtors, however well-intentioned, could not be aſſured that their impoſture would not turn more to the prejudice than advantage of Chriſtianity, ſince, though they might think themſelves ſecure in the acquieſcence of their weaker brethren, and the fidelity of their partners in the fraud, they had reaſon to apprehend the zeal and abilities of their open and avowed enemies, Heathens, Jews, and Hereticks, who, wanting neither the means nor inclination to examine the principles of a religion which with their utmoſt power they endeavoured to ſubvert, might very probably diſcover their impoſture, and would certainly take every advantage, which ſuch a diſcovery could furniſh them with, of decrying a religion which they might then with ſome colour have ſuggeſted, could not be maintained without fraud. This danger, which with the ſame penetration that enabled them to diſcover a cheat that had paſſed upon the vulgar, they muſt undoubtedly have foreſeen, would, it may be ſuppoſed, have checked their zeal, and rendered them cautious how they ventured upon an impoſture, the ſucceſs of which was ſo very precarious.

Since therefore no motive can be aſſigned, of force ſufficient to induce any Chriſtians of thoſe times, either to contrive or ſupport a forgery of this kind, ſince had any of thoſe Scriptures attributed to the apoſtles, and eſpecially the epiſtles of St. Paul, been forged and publiſhed ſo early as the writings of the moſt antient fathers ſhew them to have been known and received, it is next to impoſſible that the

* Rom. iii. 8.

fraud ſhould have eſcaped detection; and ſince the Chriſtians of thoſe ages muſt, in conſequence of ſuch a detection, have neceſſarily diſowned and rejected thoſe Scriptures as ſpurious, may we not, from their having acknowledged them as authentic, conclude, for the ſeveral reaſons above given, that the apoſtles and evangeliſts were the undoubted authors of the writings now received under their names?

But allowing the Chriſtians of thoſe early ages to have been able to diſcover the genuine works of the apoſtles from any ſpurious writings forged in their names; and allowing thoſe books, now received into the canon of the Holy Scriptures, to have been written by thoſe authors whoſe names they bear; it may be demanded how we at this time can be aſſured, that, among the great number which have ſince been aſcribed to them, they wrote only theſe? or that in ſuch a ſucceſſion of ages theſe are come down to us pure and uncorrupted? To the firſt of theſe queſtions I anſwer, that, as the Chriſtians of thoſe early ages muſt be acknowledged for competent judges of the authority of any books or writings aſcribed to the Apoſtles, ſuch book or writing as they allowed to be genuine hath an indiſputable title to that character. But to this title no other writings aſcribed to the apoſtles, beſides thoſe now received into the canon of Scripture, can pretend; ſince of moſt of them, eſpecially the falſe goſpels, we find no mention till the fourth century.

For an anſwer to the ſecond queſtion, I ſhall refer the learned reader to Dr. Whitby's "Examen variantium lectionum D. Millii *," publiſhed at the end of the ſecond volume of annotations on the New Teſtament; where he will find that the various readings, upon which the adverſaries of Chriſtianity (among whom I reckon the clergy of the church of Rome) have laid ſo great a ſtreſs, will be of little ſervice to their cauſe, the greateſt part of them being abſolutely inſignificant, and none of them, ſaith that learned writer, "either changing or corrupting any article of faith, or "rule of life."

And although, conſidering the great length of time that is paſt ſince the Scriptures were written, and the number of copies and tranſlations that have been made of them, it is no wonder that many errors ſhould have crept into them, either from the ignorance or inadvertency of tranſcribers and tranſlators, all of which have helped to ſwell the ſum of various readings; yet conſidering, on the other hand, the number of hereſies that have ſprung up in every age of Chriſtianity, all of which pretended to derive their opinions from the Scriptures; conſidering alſo the watchfulneſs of the Jews and Heathens, thoſe avowed enemies of the Goſpel, who, as appears from their writings, were no ſtrangers to the Scriptures, it would ſtill be a greater wonder that any material alteration ſhould have been made in them; ſince whoever had attempted any ſuch alteration, whether Chriſtian, Heretick, Jew, or Heathen, could not but know it was

* See Whitby's prefatory diſcourſe to the four goſpels.

impoſſible

impoſſible it ſhould eſcape the obſervation of ſo many eyes as were continually prying, though with different views, into theſe important writings. And this ſeems to me the only reaſon for their having paſſed uncorrupted through the treacherous hands of the church of Rome, who had them ſo long in her keeping. She was reſtrained from altering the Scriptures by the fear of being detected by the Eaſtern churches, who diſowned her authority; and yet there is little queſtion to be made that ſhe would have done it, had ſhe not fallen upon that leſs dangerous, though more abſurd, expedient of locking them up from the laity, and aſſuming to herſelf the ſole right of expounding them; a right, which ſhe hath aſſerted and maintained with all the artifices and cruelty that fraud and tyranny could invent. This expedient, however, though it hath hitherto preſerved Popery, hath ſaved the Scriptures, and with them Chriſtianity. For, conſidering the duration, extent, and abſoluteneſs of her power in the Weſt, had ſhe altered the text of Scripture, according to the comments ſhe had made upon it, Chriſtians (could there have been any really ſuch at this time, and in theſe parts of the world) muſt have been reduced to contend with the church of Rome, not from the Scriptures, but for the Scriptures themſelves. And what advantages infidelity and ſcepticiſm would have had in the mean time, is eaſy to imagine; ſince they are bold enough to diſpute even now the genuineneſs of thoſe Scriptures, which the very perſons, whoſe doctrines are the moſt oppoſite to them, have been neceſſitated to acknowledge and maintain.

§ 24. I am now to conſider what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to the teſtimony of the apoſtles and evangeliſts.

Two qualities are requiſite to eſtabliſh the credit of a witneſs, viz. a perfect knowledge of the fact he gives teſtimony to; and a fair and unblemiſhed character.

After what has been ſaid in the preceding parts of this diſcourſe concerning the evidences of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, it will, I hope, be granted that the apoſtles were duly qualified to be witneſſes, in point of knowledge of the fact, which they are brought to give teſtimony to. It remains then that we enquire into their characters, which may very clearly be collected from the tenor of their lives and conduct, as preachers of the Goſpel, and the purity of the doctrines they taught: not to inſiſt in favour of them upon the concluſion, which may be drawn from their very enemies not having been able to fix upon them any ſtain or blemiſh, which they themſelves have not acknowledged and lamented.

Their lives, then, after they had embraced Chriſtianity, were not only irreproachable, but holy; and their conduct, as preachers of the Goſpel, diſintereſted, noble, and generous, in the moſt exalted degree. For they not only quitted their houſes, their lands, their occupations, their friends, kindred, parents, wives and children, but their countries alſo, every purſuit, and every endearment of life, in

order to propagate, with infinite labour, through innumerable difficulties, and with the utmoſt danger, in every corner of the known world, the ſalvation of mankind; certain of meeting, in every new region, with new enemies and oppoſers; and yet requiring of thoſe, who through their preaching were become their friends and brethren, nothing but a bare ſubſiſtence; and ſometimes labouring with their own hands, to ſave them even from that light and reaſonable burthen; diſclaiming for themſelves all authority, pre-eminence, and power: and teaching thoſe ignorant and ſuperſtitious people, who, taking them for Gods, would have worſhiped them, and ſacrificed to them, that they were men like themſelves, and ſervants of that one God, to whom alone worſhip was due. Would impoſtors, who are moſt commonly intereſted, vain-glorious, and ambitious, have acted in this manner? No certainly; but it may be ſaid, Enthuſiaſts would. Be it ſo. But how can it be made appear that the apoſtles were Enthuſiaſts? If Chriſt did not riſe from the dead, moſt aſſuredly he did not preach to them after his crucifixion: upon which ſuppoſition, I apprehend, it will be very difficult to account for their returning to their faith in that maſter, whom in his diſtreſs they had abandoned and diſowned. But if Chriſt did riſe from the dead, and did, after his reſurrection, converſe with his apoſtles, I ſuppoſe it will be eaſily granted, that they had ſufficient reaſon for believing in him, and for acting in obedience to the command given them by him, to preach the goſpel throughout the world, eſpecially when they found themſelves ſo well qualified for that important commiſſion, by the miraculous powers conferred upon them by the Holy Ghoſt, and particularly the gift of tongues, ſo apparently and ſo wiſely calculated to carry on that great, that univerſal ſervice. If this, I ſay, was the caſe, then ſurely the apoſtles were no enthuſiaſts, ſince they neither believed themſelves without reaſonable proof, nor pretended to inſpiration and a divine commiſſion, without being able to give to others ſufficient evidences of both *.

Of all the admirably pure and truly divine doctrines taught by the apoſtles, I ſhall conſider only two, as more peculiarly relative to the preſent argument; and they are, the belief of a judgement to come, and the obligation of ſpeaking truth. That God will judge the world by Jeſus Chriſt, is a neceſſary article of the Chriſtian faith; and, as ſuch, is ſtrongly and frequently inculcated in the writings of the apoſtles and evangeliſts, of which it is needleſs to produce inſtances. And that Chriſtians were required by theſe preachers of holineſs to ſpeak truth upon all occaſions, the following texts will clearly evince. In Epheſ. iv. 25. the apoſtle commands that, "put-"ting away lying, they ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour." And again, Coloſſ. iii. 9. "Lye not one to another." Nay, that even the man who lyes through zeal for the glory of God, is, according to their eſtimation, to be accounted a ſinner, may be inferred from theſe words in Rom. iii. 7, 8.—"If the truth of God "hath more abounded through my lye unto his glory, why yet am

* See Mr. Locke's Chap. on Enthuſiaſm.

"I alſo

" I alſo judged as a ſinner? And not rather as we be ſlanderouſly " reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay, Let us do evil that good " may come? Whoſe damnation is juſt." That the apoſtles themſelves were fully perſuaded of the truth of thoſe two propoſitions, nobody can deny, who will call to mind that they choſe to ſuffer perſecution and death itſelf, rather than not " ſpeak the things which " they had ſeen and heard;" and that, " if in this life only they had " hope, they were of all men the moſt miſerable." Now, that any men, who firmly believed that God would puniſh them for ſpeaking an untruth, though for the advancement of a good cauſe, ſhould, at the hazard of their lives, and without any proſpect of gain or advantage, aſſert facts which at the ſame time they knew to be falſe, ſhould, for inſtance, affirm, that they ſaw and converſed with Jeſus Chriſt after his reſurrection, knowing or believing that he was not riſen from the dead, and yet expect to be judged hereafter by that very ſame Jeſus, is too improbable to gain credit with any but thoſe great believers of abſurdities the Infidels and Scepticks.

§ 25. But, beſides the many infallible tokens and evidences of the integrity of the apoſtles and evangeliſts, that may be collected from their lives and doctrines, there are alſo in their writings ſeveral internal marks of their veracity, ſome of which I ſhall now endeavour to point out, confining myſelf to ſuch parts of their writings as belong to the preſent ſubject.

The contradictions and inconſiſtencies, which ſome imagine they have diſcovered in the evangelical accounts of the reſurrection, have been urged as arguments for ſetting aſide the authority, and rejecting the evidence of the goſpels. But theſe ſuppoſed contradictions having been conſidered in the foregoing parts of this diſcourſe, and having, upon a cloſe inſpection, and comparing the ſeveral narratives with each other, been ſhewn to be ſhadowy and imaginary, and to lie no deeper than the ſuperficies and ſurface of the words; we need not be afraid of admitting theſe appearances of inconſiſtency, ſince from them it may be inferred, to the advantage of the evangeliſts, that they did not write in concert. For, had they agreed together upon giving an account of the reſurrection of Chriſt, and each of them taken, by allotment, his ſeveral portion of that hiſtory, it is probable they would ſomewhere or other have dropt ſome intimations, that the particulars omitted by them were ſupplied by others; and that ſuch and ſuch parts of their narrations were to be connected with ſuch and ſuch facts, related by their brethren; or they would have diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral incidents by ſuch ſtrong and viſible marks, and circumſtances of time and place, &c. as might have been ſufficient, at firſt ſight, to diſcover their order, and keep them from being confounded with each other: ſome, or all, of theſe things, I ſay, they would probably have done, had they written in concert. And doubtleſs they would, nay they muſt have written in concert, had they endeavoured to impoſe upon the world a cunningly-deviſed fable; and had they

not truſted to the truth and notoriety of the facts they related. Truth, like honeſty, oftentimes neglects appearances. Hypocriſy and impoſture are always guarded.

And as, from theſe ſeeming diſcordances in their accounts, we may conclude they did not write in concert, ſo, from their agreeing in the principal and moſt material facts, we may infer that they wrote after the truth. * In Xiphilin and Theodoſius, the two abbreviators of Dio Caſſius, may be obſerved the like agreement and diſagreement; the one taking notice of many particulars, which the other paſſes over in ſilence, and both of them relating the chief and moſt remarkable events. And as from their both frequently making uſe of the very ſame words and expreſſions, when they ſpeak of the ſame thing, it is apparent that they both copied from the ſame original; ſo I believe nobody was ever abſurd enough to imagine, that the particulars mentioned by the one were not taken out of Dio Caſſius, merely becauſe they are omitted by the other. And ſtill more abſurd would it be to ſay, as ſome have lately done of the evangeliſts, that the facts related by Theodoſius are contradicted by Xiphilin, becauſe the latter ſays nothing of them. But againſt the evangeliſts, it ſeems, all kinds of arguments may not only be employed, but applauded. The caſe, however, of the ſacred hiſtorians is exactly parallel to that of theſe two abbreviators. The latter extracted the particulars related in their ſeveral abridgments from the hiſtory of Dio Caſſius, as the former drew the materials of their goſpels from the life of Jeſus Chriſt. The two laſt tranſcribed their relations from a certain collection of facts contained in one and the ſame hiſtory; the four firſt from a certain collection of facts contained in the life of one and the ſame perſon, laid before them by that Spirit which was to lead them into all truth; and why the fidelity of the four tranſcribers ſhould be called in queſtion for reaſons which hold equally ſtrong againſt the two who are not ſuſpected, I leave thoſe to determine who lay ſuch a weight upon this objection.

Another mark of the veracity of the evangeliſts appears in their naming the time, the ſcene of action, the actors, and the witneſſes, of moſt of the facts mentioned by them; which I ſhall give a remarkable inſtance of in one relating to the preſent ſubject, the reſurrection; viz. the guarding the ſepulchre of Chriſt. The time was that of the celebration of the paſſover, the moſt ſolemn feſtival of the Jews; the ſcene was in Jeruſalem, the metropolis of Judea; and at that time crouded with Jews, who came thither from all parts of the earth to keep the paſſover: the actors and witneſſes were the chief prieſts and elders, Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, and the Roman ſoldiers who guarded the ſepulchre. Now, if the ſtory of guarding the ſepulchre had been falſe, it is not to be doubted but the chief prieſts and elders, who are ſaid to have obtained the guard and ſealed the door of the ſepulchre, would by ſome authentick act have cleared themſelves of the folly and guilt

* Vide, Dio Caſſ. Hiſt. edit. Leunclav. Fol. Hanov. 1606.

imputed

imputed to them by the evangeliſt, who charges the chief prieſts with having bribed the ſoldiers to tell not only a lye, but an abſurd lye, that carried its own confutation with it; the ſoldiers, with confeſſing a breach of diſcipline, that by the military law was puniſhable with death; and the governor, with the ſuſpicion at leaſt of being capable of overlooking ſo heinous a crime, at the inſtigation of the chief prieſts, &c. All theſe ſeveral charges upon the whole government of Judea might have been anſwered at once by any atteſtation from the chief prieſts, ſetting forth, that they never demanded a guard to be ſet at the ſepulchre, confirmed by the teſtimony of all the Roman officers and ſoldiers (many of whom were probably at Jeruſalem when this goſpel was written) denying that they were ever upon that guard. This not only the reputation of the chief prieſts, but their avowed malice to Chriſt, and averſion to his doctrine and religion, required; and this, even upon the ſuppoſition of the ſtory of guarding the ſepulchre being true, they would probably have done, had they been at liberty to propagate and invent what lye they pleaſed: but that a guard was ſet at the ſepulchre was in all likelihood, by the diſperſion and flight of the ſoldiers into the city, too well known in Jeruſalem for them to venture at denying it; for which reaſon, as I have before obſerved, they were obliged to invent a lye conſiſtent with that known fact, however abſurd and improbable it might appear when it came to be conſidered and examined. Now as the report, put into the mouths of the Roman ſoldiers by the chief prieſts and elders, is no proof of the falſehood of this fact, but rather of the contrary; ſo does the naming the time, the ſcene, the actors, and the witneſſes, form a very ſtrong preſumption of its being true, ſince no forger of lyes willingly and wittingly furniſhes out the means of his own detection; eſpecially when we conſider, that this ſtory is related by that evangeliſt who is ſaid to have written neareſt the time, and to have compoſed his goſpel for thoſe Chriſtians who dwelt in Judea, many of whom then living were probably at Jeruſalem when this thing was done.

The ſtrict attachment and regard to truth, of all the evangeliſts, is farther manifeſted in their relating of themſelves and their brethren many things that, in the opinion of the world, could not but turn much to their diſhonour and diſcredit. Such as their denying and deſerting their maſter in his extremity, and their dulneſs in not underſtanding his predictions about his riſing from the dead, though expreſſed in the plaineſt and moſt intelligible words. A man's confeſſion againſt himſelf, or his friends, is generally preſumed to be true. If the evangeliſts, therefore, be allowed to be the authors of thoſe goſpels which bear their names, or if thoſe writings are ſuppoſed to have been forged by ſome friends of Chriſtianity, they muſt in theſe inſtances at leaſt be acknowledged to relate the truth, till ſome other good reaſon, beſides that of their attachment to the truth, can be aſſigned for their inſerting ſuch diſgraceful and diſhonourable accounts of themſelves and their friends.

But

But there is nothing that ſets the veracity of the ſacred writers ſo much above all queſtion and ſuſpicion, as what they tell us about the low condition, the infirmities, the ſufferings, and the death of the great author and finiſher of their faith, Chriſt Jeſus. He hungered, they ſay, he was poor, ſo poor, as not to "have where "to lay his head;" he wept, hid himſelf for fear of the Jews who ſought to kill him; and, when his hour drew nigh, he was dejected, ſorrowful, "exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death:" he prayed, that the cup of affliction, which was then mixing for him, might, if poſſible, paſs from him. And though he was "ſtrengthened by an angel "from heaven," yet, "being in agony, he prayed more earneſtly, "and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to "the ground." After this, he was ſeized like a common malefactor, abandoned by all his followers and friends; led bound, firſt to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then back again to Pilate; and, laſtly, after enduring a thouſand inſults and indignities, after having been buffeted, ſpit upon, and ſcourged. was carried to ſuffer upon the croſs the infamous and painful death of offending ſlaves, and the vileſt criminals. And yet this hungry, houſeleſs, ſuffering, dying Jeſus, is by the ſame writers ſaid to have fed a multitude of many thouſands with five loaves and two fiſhes; to have commanded the fiſh of the ſea to provide him money to pay the tribute; to have been miniſtered unto by angels; to have been obeyed by the winds and ſeas; to have had in himſelf, and to have imparted to his diſciples, authority over unclean ſpirits, and the power of healing all manner of diſeaſes; to have raiſed the dead by a touch, a word; to have been able to have obtained from God, whom he called his Father, an army of more than twelve legions of angels, a force ſufficient not only to have reſcued him from the ſufferings and death he deprecated, but to have acquired him the empire of the world; and, laſtly, as an inſtance of his being endued with a power ſuperior even to deſtruction itſelf, he is ſaid to have riſen from the dead, to have aſcended into heaven, and to ſit down for ever at the right-hand of God. From theſe accounts it is plain, that the character of Jeſus Chriſt, as drawn up by the evangeliſts, is a mixture of ſuch ſeeming inconſiſtencies, ſo wonderful a compoſition of weakneſs and power, humiliation and glory, humanity and divinity, that as no mere mortal could pretend to come up to it, ſo the wit of man would never have conceived and propoſed ſuch a one for the founder of any ſect or religion. The ſufferings and croſs of Chriſt were, as St. Paul confeſſes, "to the Jews a ſtumbling-"block, and fooliſhneſs to the Greeks." The Jews, it is well known, expected a temporal deliverer, an earthly prince, a glorious conquering Meſſiah; and were therefore ſo ſcandalized at the low condition and abject fortunes of Jeſus, ſo ill-proportioned, as they imagined, to the ſublime character of the Son of God, that upon account of thoſe human blemiſhes only, they rejected all the miraculous evidences of his divine miſſion, and put him to death as a blaſphemer, for taking upon him the name, without the temporal

ſplendor

ſplendor and power of the Meſſiah. That the diſciples of Jeſus were tainted with the like prejudices with their unbelieving brethren the Jews, is very natural to believe, and may certainly be collected from the writings of the evangeliſts, from whom we learn, that when convinced by his miracles, his doctrine, and his life, they had acknowledged him to be the Meſſiah, they were ſo offended at what he told them of his ſufferings and death, that they refuſed to believe him; "and Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, 'Be "it far from thee, Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee *." The deſpicable condition, the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, being admitted, I think it impoſſible to give one probable reaſon for ſuppoſing that the apoſtles and the evangeliſts invented the other more than human part of his character. Had he wrought no miracles, had he not riſen from the dead, their religious prejudices, as they were Jews, muſt have with-held them for ever from acknowledging him for their Meſſiah; and yet it is notorious, that not only they themſelves acknowledged him as ſuch, but endeavoured to perſuade their unbelieving brethren, that "God had made that ſame Jeſus, whom they had crucified, "both Lord and Chriſt." This was the great article, the foundation-ſtone, upon which the whole ſuperſtructure of Chriſtianity was raiſed; and, to prove this article, they appealed to his miracles, as ſo many evidences of his divine miſſion. But here modern unbelievers (for Celſus, who lived neareſt thoſe times, admits all the miracles of Chriſt, but imputes them to his ſkill in magic) come in with their ſuſpicions, and pretend to call in queſtion the accounts given us of theſe miracles in the evangeliſts, which, without any proof, they are pleaſed to take for forgeries: in anſwer to which (not to inſiſt upon the improbability that any man, or any ſet of men in their ſenſes, ſhould venture to appeal to their enemies for the truth of facts, which they themſelves knew to be falſe, eſpecially when thoſe enemies had not only the means of detecting them, but the inclination and power to puniſh them for their impoſtures; not to inſiſt, I ſay, upon this topic, nor upon that which I juſt now mentioned of its being impoſſible to aſſign any motive that could induce them to be guilty of ſuch a forgery), I ſhall only obſerve, that, allowing them to have been ſo ſhameleſs and ſo wicked as to invent and propagate a ſet of lyes in order to get credit to their maſter and his religion, it is ſtrange they ſhould not go one ſtep farther, and ſuppreſs at leaſt, if not deny, his infirmities, his ſufferings, and his crucifixion, and ſo remove that ſtumbling-block, which they could not but know would be the greateſt obſtacle to the advancement of their religion, as well among the Gentiles as the Jews. But it will be urged, perhaps, that his ſufferings and crucifixion were too public to be denied; and ſo, ſay the evangeliſts, were moſt of his miracles: and this undoubtedly was the reaſon why they were acknowledged by Celſus. To ſuppoſe, therefore, that the evangeliſts, for fear of being detected, would confeſs truths, which manifeſtly prejudiced their great deſign of propagat-

* Matth. xvi. 22.

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ing the faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and yet would not by the ſame fear of detection be reſtrained from relating untruths, becauſe they might imagine them to be advantageous to their cauſe, is no mark of equity and candour, but of partiality and prejudice. But it will poſſibly be ſaid (for what will not infidels "ſay?" and I will add, how ſtrange ſoever it may ſound, what will they not "believe?") that the Scriptures were forged long after the events recorded in them, and conſequently long after all the evidences of their truth or falſehood were extinct and loſt. In anſwer to this it may be again demanded, as in the caſe of the evangeliſts, how came theſe later forgers to chuſe the ſuffering crucified Jeſus for the author of their religion? And why, ſince they were at liberty to ſay what they pleaſed, without any apprehenſion of being diſcovered, why, I ſay, did they relate ſuch things both of him and his diſciples, as, in the opinion of the world, could not fail of diſcrediting the faith they preached in his name, and by an authority pretended to be derived from him and his diſciples? But, without entering into theſe conſiderations, it may be ſufficient barely to deny this charge, till they who inſiſt upon it ſhall be able to make it good by ſhewing either from authentick teſtimonies, or even probable and preſumptive arguments, when they were forged; by whom; and to what end. Till they are able to do this (which I will venture to pronounce will never be), we have a right to inſiſt, for the reaſons above given, that the Scriptures of the New Teſtament were written by thoſe whoſe names they bear, and that all the facts related in them are moſt unqueſtionably true.

Before I quit this ſubject, I cannot forbear taking notice of one other mark of integrity which appears in all the compoſitions of the ſacred writers, and particularly the evangeliſts; and that is, the ſimple, unaffected, unornamental, and unoſtentatious manner, in which they deliver truths ſo important and ſublime, and facts ſo magnificent and wonderful, as are capable, one would think, of lighting up a flame of oratory, even in the dulleſt and coldeſt breaſts. They ſpeak of an angel deſcending from heaven to foretell the miraculous conception of Jeſus, of another proclaiming his birth, attended by "a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God, "and ſaying, Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, "good-will towards men;" of his ſtar appearing in the Eaſt; of angels miniſtering to him in the wilderneſs; of his glory in the mount; of a voice twice heard from heaven, ſaying, "This is my "beloved Son;" of innumerable miracles performed by him, and by his diſciples in his name; of his knowing the thoughts of men; of his foretelling future events; of prodigies and wonders accompanying his crucifixion and death; of an angel deſcending in terrors, opening his ſepulchre, and frightening away the ſoldiers who were ſet to guard it; of his riſing from the dead, aſcending into heaven, and pouring down, according to his promiſe, the various and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon his apoſtles and diſciples. All theſe amazing incidents do theſe inſpired hiſtorians relate nakedly

and plainly, without any of the colourings and heightnings of rhetoric, or ſo much as a ſingle note of admiration; without making any comment or remark upon them, or drawing from them any concluſion in honour either of their maſter or themſelves, or to the advantage of the religion they preached in his name; but contenting themſelves with relating the naked truth, whether it ſeems to make for them or againſt them, without either magnifying on the one hand, or palliating on the other, they leave their cauſe to the unbiaſſed judgement of mankind, ſeeking, like genuine apoſtles of the Lord of truth, to convince rather than to perſuade; and therefore "coming," as St. Paul ſpeaks of his own preaching, "not with "excellency of ſpeech,—not with inticing words of man's wiſdom, "but with demonſtration of the ſpirit, and of power, that," adds he, "your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the "power of God *." And let it be remembered that he, who ſpeaks this, wanted not learning, art, or eloquence, as is evident from his ſpeeches recorded in the Acts of the apoſtles, and from the teſtimony of that great critic Longinus, who, in reckoning up the Grecian orators, places among them Paul of Tarſus †; and ſurely, had they been left ſolely to the ſuggeſtions and guidance of human wiſdom, they would not have failed to lay hold on ſuch topics, as the wonders of their maſter's life, and the tranſcendent purity and perfection of the noble, generous, benevolent morality contained in his precepts, furniſhed them with. Theſe topicks, I ſay, greater than ever Tully, or Demoſthenes, or Plato, were poſſeſſed of, mere human wiſdom would doubtleſs have prompted them to make uſe of, in order to recommend in the ſtrongeſt manner the religion of Chriſt Jeſus to mankind, by turning their attention to the divine part of his character, and hiding, as it were in a blaze of heavenly light and glory, his infirmities, his ſufferings, and his death. And had they upon ſuch topicks as theſe, and in ſuch a cauſe, called in to their aſſiſtance all the arts of compoſition, rhetoric, and logic, who would have blamed them for it? Not thoſe perſons, I preſume, who, dazzled and captivated with the glittering ornaments of human wiſdom, make a mock at the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and think it wit to ridicule the ſtyle and language of the Holy Scriptures. But the all-wiſe Spirit of God, by whom theſe ſacred writers were guided into all truth, thought fit to direct or permit them to proceed in a different method; a method, however, very analogous to that, in which he hath been pleaſed to reveal himſelf to us in the great book of nature, the ſtupendous frame of the univerſe; all whoſe wonders he hath judged it ſufficient to lay before us in ſilence, and expects from our obſervations the proper comments and deductions, which, having endued us with reaſon, he hath enabled us to make. And though a careleſs and ſuperficial ſpectator may fancy he perceives even in this fair volume many inconſiſtencies, defects, and ſuperfluities; yet to a diligent, unprejudiced, and rational inquirer, who will take pains to examine the laws,

* 1 Cor. ii. 2, iv. 5. † Vide Long. Frag. Edit. Pearce.

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conſider and compare the ſeveral parts, and regard their uſe and tendency, with reference to the whole deſign of this amazing ſtructure, as far as his ſhort abilities can carry him, there will appear, in thoſe inſtances which he is capable of knowing, ſuch evident characters of wiſdom, goodneſs, and power, as will leave him no room to doubt of their author, or to ſuſpect that in thoſe particulars which he hath not examined, or to a thorough knowledge of which he cannot perhaps attain, there is nothing but folly, weakneſs, and malignity. The ſame thing might be ſaid of the written book, the ſecond volume (if I may ſo ſpeak) of the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures. For as in the Firſt, ſo alſo in this are there many paſſages, that to a curſory unobſerving reader appear idle, unconnected, unaccountable, and inconſiſtent with thoſe marks of truth, wiſdom, juſtice, mercy, and benevolence, which in others are ſo viſible, that the moſt careleſs and inattentive cannot but diſcern them. And even theſe, many of them at leaſt, will often be found, upon a cloſer and ſtricter examination, to accord and coincide with the other more plain and more intelligible paſſages, and to be no heterogeneous parts of one and the ſame wiſe and harmonious compoſition. In both, indeed, in the "Natural" as well as the "Moral Book of God," there are, and ever will be many difficulties, which the wit of man may never be able to reſolve; but will a wiſe philoſopher, becauſe he cannot comprehend every thing he ſees, reject for that reaſon all the truths that lie within his reach, and let a few inexplicable difficulties over-balance the many plain and infallible evidences of the finger of God, which appear in all parts, both of his "created" and "written works?" Or will he preſume ſo far upon his own wiſdom, as to ſay, God ought to have expreſſed himſelf more clearly? The point and exact degree of clearneſs, which will equally ſuit the different capacities of men in different ages and countries, will, I believe, be found more difficult to fix than is imagined; ſince what is clear to one man in a certain ſituation of mind, time, and place, will inevitably be obſcure to another, who views it in other poſitions, and under other circumſtances. How various and even contradictory are the readings and comments, which ſeveral men, in the ſeveral ages and climates of the world, have made upon nature! And yet her characters are equally legible, and her laws equally intelligible, in all times and in all places; "There is no ſpeech nor language where "her voice is not heard. Her ſound is gone out through all the "earth, and her words to the ends of the world." All theſe miſinterpretrations therefore, and miſconſtructions, of her works, are chargeable only upon mankind, who have ſet themſelves to ſtudy them with various degrees of capacity, application, and impartiality. The queſtion then ſhould be, Why hath God given men ſuch various talents? And not, Why hath not God expreſſed himſelf more clearly? And the anſwer to this queſtion, as far as it concerns man to know, is, that God will require of him according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. If what

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is neceſſary for all to know, is knowable by all; thoſe men, upon whom God hath been pleaſed to beſtow capacities and faculties ſuperior to the vulgar, have certainly no juſt reaſon to complain of his having left them materials for the exerciſe of thoſe talents, which, if all things were equally plain to all men, would be of no great advantage to the poſſeſſors. If, therefore, there are in the ſacred writings, as well as in the works of nature, many paſſages hard to be underſtood, it were to be wiſhed that the wiſe and learned, inſtead of being offended at them, and teaching others to be ſo too, would be perſuaded that both God and man expect that they would ſet themſelves to conſider and examine them carefully and impartially, and with a ſincere deſire of diſcovering and embracing the truth, not with an arrogant unphiloſophical conceit of their being already ſufficiently wiſe and knowing. And then I doubt not but moſt of thoſe objections to revelation, which are now urged with the greateſt confidence, would be cleared up and removed, like thoſe formerly made to Creation, and the being and providence of God, by thoſe moſt ignorant, moſt abſurd, and yet moſt ſelf-ſufficient pretenders to reaſon and philoſophy, the Atheiſts and Scepticks.

§ 26. To theſe internal evidences of the veracity (and may I not add inſpiration?) of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, I ſhall beg leave to ſubjoin two external proofs of great weight in an enquiry into the reaſons we have for giving credit to their teſtimony; the one negative, the other poſitive.

The negative proof is contained in this propoſition, viz. That out of the great number of facts related by the ſacred writers, publick and extraordinary as they are ſaid to have been, not one in the courſe of now almoſt ſeventeen hundred years hath ever been diſproved or falſified. Denied, indeed, many of them have been, and ſtill are; but there is a great deal of difference between "denying" and "diſproving." To prove a fact to be falſe, it is neceſſary that the poſitive and probable evidence brought againſt it ſhould overbalance that produced in ſupport of it. In oppoſition to the teſtimony of the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, aſſerting that he was riſen from the dead, the chief prieſts and elders of the Jews affirmed, that his diſciples ſtole away his body, and then gave out that he was riſen; in maintenance of which charge they produced, as St. Matthew tells us *, the Roman Soldiers, who were ſet to guard the ſepulchre, who depoſed, that "his diſciples came by night and "ſtole him away while they ſlept." Not to inſiſt again upon the abſurdity of this report as it ſtands in the Evangeliſt, and taking it as it was afterwards prudently amended by the Sanhedrim, and propagated by an expreſs deputation from them to all the ſynagogues of the Jews † throughout the world, in which, without making any mention of the Roman guard, they ſay no more than that the diſciples came by night, and ſtole away the body; taking it, I ſay, in

* Ch. xxviii. 13. † Juſtin. Martyr. Dial. cum Typh. Jud.

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the manner in which thoſe wiſe counſellors were upon maturer deliberation pleaſed to put it, it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that this theft charged upon the diſciples, was ſo far from being proved, that it was not ſo much as ever enquired into. And yet the accuſers were the chief prieſts and elders of the Jews; men in high reverence and authority with the people, veſted with all the power of the ſtate, and conſequently furniſhed with all the means of procuring informations, and of gaining or extorting a confeſſion. And what were the accuſed? men of low birth, mean fortunes, without learning, without credit, without ſupport; and who, out of puſillanimity and fear had deſerted their maſter, upon the firſt occaſion offered of ſhewing their fidelity and attachment to him. And can it be imagined that the chief prieſts and council would have made no enquiry into a fact, the belief of which they took ſo much pains to propagate, had they themſelves been perſuaded of the truth of it? And had they enquired into it, can it be ſuppoſed that out of ſuch a number of mean perſons as muſt have been privy to it, no one either from honeſty or religion, the fear of puniſhment or hope of reward, would have betrayed the ſecret, and given them ſuch intelligence as might have enabled them to put the queſtion of the reſurrection out of all diſpute? For had it been once proved that the diſciples ſtole away the body of Jeſus, their words would hardly have been taken for his reſurrection. But how did theſe poor men act? Conſcious of no fraud and impoſture, they remained in Jeruſalem a week or more after the report of their having ſtolen their maſter's body was ſpread over the city; and in about a month returned thither again; not long after which they aſſerted boldly to the face of their powerful enemies and accuſers, the Chief Prieſts and Elders, that "God had "raiſed from the dead that ſame Jeſus, whom they had crucified." And what was the behaviour of theſe learned Rabbins, theſe watchful guardians of the Jewiſh church and ſtate? Why, they ſuffered the diſciples of Jeſus, charged by their order with an impoſture tending to diſturb the government, to continue unqueſtioned at Jeruſalem, and to depart from thence unmoleſted: And when, upon their return thither, they had cauſed them to be ſeized and brought before them, for * "preaching through Jeſus the re-"ſurrection of the dead," what did they ſay to them? Did they charge them with having ſtolen away the body of their maſter? Nothing like it. On the contrary, not being able to gainſay the teſtimony given by the Apoſtles to the reſurrection of Jeſus, vouched by a miracle juſt then performed by them in his name, they ordered them to withdraw, and † "conferred among themſelves, "ſaying, What ſhall we do to theſe men? for that, indeed, a notable "miracle hath been done by them, is manifeſt to all that dwell in Je-"ruſalem, and we cannot deny it. But that it ſpread no farther "among the people, let us ſtraitly threaten them, that they ſpeak "henceforth to no man in this name: And they called them, and

* Acts iv. † Ibid. ver. 15, 22.

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" commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the name of " Jeſus. Peter and John anſwered, and ſaid unto them, Whether " it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than " unto God, judge ye: For we cannot but ſpeak the things which " we have ſeen and heard. So when they had farther threatened " them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might puniſh them. Who, after hearing this account, could ever imagine that the diſciples ſtole the body of Jeſus? or that the Chief Prieſts and Elders themſelves believed they did? But it may, perhaps, be objected, that this account comes from Chriſtian writers: And could the objectors expect to meet with it in Jewiſh authors? We might, indeed, expect to find in their writings ſome proofs of this charge upon the diſciples; and, had there been any, the Chief Prieſts, and the other adverſaries of Chriſt, would, doubtleſs, not have failed to produce them. But the progreſs that Chriſtianity made at that time in Jeruſalem is a ſtronger argument than even their ſilence, that no proof of this charge either was or could be made. Could the Apoſtles have had the imprudence to preach, and could ſo many thouſand Jews have been weak enough to believe upon their teſtimony, that Chriſt was riſen from the dead, had it been proved that his diſciples ſtole away his body? An infidel may, if he pleaſes, believe this, but let him account for it if he can,

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this pretended theft of the diſciples, becauſe it is the only fact I know of that hath been ſet up in oppoſition to the many facts upon which the evidence of the reſurrection is founded. How defective it is in point of proof, whether probable or poſitive, I need not point out to the reader. But I cannot help obſerving, that thoſe, who deny that any guard was placed at the ſepulchre, take from it the only poſitive evidence that was ever brought to ſupport it, viz. the depoſitions of the Roman ſoldiers.

Among the many extraordinary particulars related by the ſacred writers, the miracles performed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as they were almoſt without number, and wrought moſt commonly in publick, in the preſence of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, yielded the faireſt occaſion to the oppoſers of the Goſpel of overturning the credit of the evangelical hiſtorians. And yet the pitiful ſolutions which Pagan and Jewiſh writers have been reduced to make uſe of, in order to take off the concluſion drawn from theſe miracles by the Chriſtians, form a very ſtrong preſumption, that they were not to be diſproved. Some, as * Celſus, have imputed them to magick; others, as the Jews, have attributed them to the ineffable name of God, which †, ſay they, Jeſus ſtole out of the temple. Both of them have admitted the facts. I ſhall not go about to ſhew the abſurdity of either of theſe two ways of accounting for thoſe miraculous operations: but I muſt hence take occaſion to beg the reader to reflect a little upon the ſtrange perverſeneſs of the human

* See Origen contra Celſum, † See Univ. Hiſt. vol. IV. p. 200, note T.

mind, the vanity of reaſon, and the force of prejudice. Celſus believed magic, the Jews had faith in amulets; and yet both one and the other diſbelieved Chriſtianity!

§ 27. The poſitive proof of the veracity of the ſacred writers is founded on the exact accompliſhment of the predictions of our Saviour and his Apoſtles recorded in the New Teſtament.

That I may not draw out this article into an exceſſive and unneceſſary length, I ſhall make no remarks upon thoſe predictions, whoſe accompliſhment is to be found in the Scriptures themſelves; ſome of which I have already taken notice of. The Scriptures, Infidels perhaps will ſay, were written after theſe events, and the predictions, therefore, probably adapted to them. But they who make this objection will gain little by it; ſince, if they admit the events, it will be no difficult matter to demonſtrate the truth of Chriſtianity. Beſides, the reader himſelf may, with very little pains, find out and compare theſe predictions with their ſeveral completions.

The prophecies I ſhall produce relate to the different ſtates of the Jews and Gentiles; different not only from each other, but very different from that in which they both were at the time when theſe prophecies were written: to have a perfect underſtanding of which, it will be neceſſary to take a general view of the religious ſtate (for that is principally regarded in theſe prophecies) of the nations diſtinguiſhed by the names of Jews and Gentiles.

From the time of the covenant (or compact) which God was pleaſed to make with Abraham and his deſcendents, and to renew with the whole body of the Iſraelites under Moſes, the Jews became the peculiar "people of God:" a phraſe ſufficiently juſtified and explained by the terms or conditions of the covenant, which, on the part of the Iſraelites, were the taking God only for their Lord, and paying obedience to the law, the ceremonial as well as moral law, which he had given them. On the part of God, were ſtipulated temporal bleſſings, and his almighty protection to the Jews, as long as they ſhould adhere to the conditions entered into by them. By virtue of this covenant, the Jews acknowledged God for their king, and God governed them as his ſubjects, by his deputies and viceroys, the prophets, judges, and kings of Iſrael. Moſes, the mediator of this covenant, was the firſt of theſe deputies; and the Meſſiah, who was to be the mediator of a new covenant, was to be the laſt. By him the new covenant was to be offered, firſt indeed to the Jews, with whom the covenant mediated by Moſes was till then to be in force. But the other was not to be limited to that people only. The Gentiles, that is, all the nations of the earth, who were no parties to the former covenant, were to be invited to accede to this; and all thoſe, of whatſoever nation they were, who ſhould acknowledge the Meſſiah as a king appointed by God to reign over them, were to be admitted into this covenant, and be reputed thenceforward the "people of God." But as the limits of this divine empire were to be altered and enlarged, it became neceſſary to alter and enlarge the terms of government. The ceremonial

monial law was national and local: and though, without ſome ſuch religious and political bond of union, the Jews would not, in all probability, have long continued the ſeparate and peculiar people of God, yet, as moſt of the duties preſcribed by that law were confined to the Holy Land, and even to the holy city of Jeruſalem, the Gentiles, who were now to be taken into the covenant, could not poſſibly comply with it. This, therefore, was of neceſſity to be aboliſhed. But the moral law, the baſis and end of the former covenant, was in like manner to be the end and baſis of the new one. To this both the Gentiles and Jews could pay obedience, as well as to the other terms ſuper-added to it in the new covenant, viz the acknowledging the Meſſiah for their king; and, as an outward token of their allegiance and acceſſion to this covenant, receiving baptiſm, and commemorating from time to time, by the celebration of the euchariſt, the ſealing this covenant on the part of God by the death of Chriſt; which two ſacraments, properly ſo called, may be ſtyled the ceremonial law of the Chriſtians, as circumciſion and other ritual duties were of the Jews.

Of the twelve tribes of Iſrael, who were parties of the Moſaical covenant, ten fell at once from their allegiance to God under Jeroboam; and ceaſing from that time to be the people or ſubjects of God, he ceaſed to be their king; and, withdrawing his protection, ſuffered them to be carried into a captivity, from which they never afterwards returned; but, being loſt and confounded with the nations among whom they were tranſplanted, were thenceforward no more heard of as a diſtinct and ſeparate people. The two remaining tribes were then the only people of God; and as ſuch, though often puniſhed by him for their frequent tranſgreſſions of his laws, and even carried captive to Babylon, were by his providence brought back again to the land of Canaan, and reſtored to a capacity of complying with the terms of their covenant, by the rebuilding the city and temple of Jeruſalem. From that time they were very exact in their obſervance of the ceremonial law, but had moſt groſsly corrupted the moral law, and rendered it, as Chriſt told them, of no effect, by the comments and traditions of their Scribes and Phariſees. This was the ſtate of the Jews when Jeſus the Meſſiah, that great prophet and king foretold by Moſes and all the Prophets, came to offer them a new covenant.

The ſtate of the Gentiles was far more deplorable. They had for many ages transferred their obedience from the one ſupreme God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, to his creatures, or to deities of their own deviſing, under whoſe imaginary protection they had ranged themſelves by nations and communities, and had become, almoſt in the ſame ſenſe as the Iſraelites were ſtyled the people of God, the people of the "Ægyptian Iſis, Aſſyrian Belus, Athenian Pallas, "Epheſian Diana, and Capitolian Jove," &c. But there was this farther difference between them: the God of the Iſraelites, like a righteous and equitable ſovereign, had given his people a law, to be

the rule of their obedience, or rather had confirmed and enforced the original law, which from the very beginning he had written in the hearts, i. e. the reaſon of all mankind, adding to it ſuch other inſtitutions as their particular ſituation then required; while the Gentiles, having by their idolatry fallen from their obedience to that original univerſal law, were left, thenceforward, like out-laws and rebels, to frame to themſelves ſuch rules, both moral and religious, as the fancied caprice of their deities or their own perverted reaſon ſhould ſuggeſt; whence it came to paſs, that they were overrun with immorality and ſuperſtition. And though ſome of the wiſeſt among them, by following the yet glimmering light of reaſon, had become ſenſible of many of their groſſeſt errors, and had endeavoured to reform ſome abuſes, yet had ſuperſtition taken ſo ſtrong a hold on the majority, that, till that was entirely rooted out, it was impoſſible to bring them back to what is called the religion of nature, i. e. the religion of reaſon, were we to allow thoſe "wiſe men" to have been as well acquainted with it, in all its branches, as ſince Chriſtianity ſome have pretended to be. But with the ſuperſtition of their countries thoſe "wiſe men" thought it better to comply than to contend. And had they attacked it with the intrepidity and induſtry of the apoſtles, it is much to be queſtioned, whether with all their eloquence and logic they would have gained the victory. Such was the dark and hopeleſs condition of the Gentiles.

In this ſtate of the Jews and Gentiles, our Saviour, after having repreſented to the former, under the parable of a "certain houſholder "who planted a vineyard, and let it out to huſbandmen *, the righteous dealings of God to them, and the ill returns they had made to him, by not only refuſing him the fruits, but murdering the ſervants he had ſent to demand them, and laſtly his ſon; and after having extorted from them a confeſſion that thoſe "wicked" huſbandmen ought to be "miſerably puniſhed," and the "vine-"yard" taken from them, and given to "other huſbandmen, who "ſhould render him the fruits in their ſeaſon," ſpoke to them the following words: "did you never read in the Scriptures, The ſtone "which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the "corner: This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our "eyes? Therefore ſay I unto you, the kingdom of God ſhall be "taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the "fruits thereof: and whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone, ſhall "be broken; but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him "to powder." By theſe words are plainly ſignified, 1ſt, the tranſferring the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles; 2dly, the obedience of the Gentiles; and, 3dly, the miſerable puniſhment of the Jews, for their having rejected and murdered the Son of God. There are many other prophecies relating to each of theſe events ſcattered up and down the Goſpels, which I think it needleſs to produce, this being ſo very full and explicit. I ſhall

* Matt. xxi. 43, 44.

therefore

therefore ſet about ſhewing the exact accompliſhment of it in its ſeveral parts.

The kingdom of God, as may be collected from what is ſaid above, denotes the ſpiritual or moral dominion of God over moral ſubjects, i. e. free agents; and by the people of God are ſignified ſuch free agents as freely and voluntarily acknowledge the ſovereignty of God, by worſhiping him, and receiving and obeying all thoſe laws, whether natural or revealed, which appear to have been enacted by him. The Jews therefore by rejecting Jeſus Chriſt, who proved himſelf to have been commiſſioned and ſent by God, not only from the teſtimony of Moſes and all their prophets, the holineſs of his life and doctrine, and the numberleſs miracles he wrought among them, but ſtill more plainly, if poſſible, by his riſing from the dead, and empowering his diſciples to work the ſame mighty ſigns and wonders in his name: the Jews, I ſay, by rejecting this meſſenger, this Son of God, and refuſing to receive the laws which he propoſed to them in his Father's name, evidently renounced their allegiance to God, and ceaſed to be his people or ſubjects. And the Gentiles, on the other hand, by renouncing their vices and idolatrous ſuperſtitions, returning to the worſhip of God, and receiving his Meſſiah, together with the laws propoſed to them by him in the name of God, as evidently put themſelves under the dominion of God, acknowledged his empire, and became the people or ſubjects of God. And hence appears what is meant by the "Kingdom of God being taken "from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles." God removed the throne, whereon David and his poſterity had ſat as his ſubſtitutes and viceroys, from among the Jews, who renounced his authority, and from earth to heaven; and placing it at his right hand, and ſetting upon it his Meſſiah, his only Son, gave him for his ſubjects, not one nation only, but all nations and kindreds, and people, and all the ends of the earth, for his dominion. That the kingdom of God was in this ſenſe, and in this manner, actually transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, is too notorious to need any proof. The Jews as a nation rejected the Goſpel, and perſiſted in their refuſal of the Meſſiah, till the final deſtruction of their holy city and temple; and, what is yet more ſtrange, ſtill preſevere in their obſtinacy. Whereas the Gentiles embraced it ſo univerſally, that, within a few centuries after Chriſt, almoſt the whole Roman empire, that is, almoſt the then known world, forſook idolatry, and became Chriſtian. And God on his part teſtified that he entered into covenant with them, and accepted the allegiance, by powering upon them the gifts of his Holy Spirit; as he ſignified, on the other hand, his renunciation of the Moſaical covenant, by not only ſuffering the ſeat of his empire, the city and temple of Jeruſalem, to be utterly deſtroyed, but permitting the Jews alſo to be baniſhed from the holy land, and ſcattered through all the nations of the earth. And thus was this prophecy moſt exactly accompliſhed in all its parts.

§ 28. Beſides the general change in the ſtate of the Jews and Gentiles, expreſſed in this prophecy, many particulars relating to the con-

dition of the Jewish nation were most precisely foretold by our Saviour Christ. As, first, the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; secondly, the signs and wonders preceding that destruction; thirdly, the miseries of the Jews before, at, and after, the famous siege of that city; fourthly, the dispersion of that reprobated people; fifthly, the duration of their calamity; and, sixthly, their restoration.

" Our Saviour foretold the destruction of the temple, after it had " stood almost 500 years, in these words: ' Seest thou these great " buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, which " shall not be thrown down *. And this prediction was compleated " by † Titus, who, saith Josephus, commanded his soldiers ' to " dig up the foundation both of the temple and the city.' And both " the Jewish Talmud and Maimonides add, that Terentius Rufus, " the captain of his army, did with a plough-share tear up the foun- " dation of the temple.

" With like exactness and particularity did our Lord foretell the " ruin of the city of Jerusalem: ' The days,' saith he, ' shall come " upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and " compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay " thee even with the ground, and shall not leave thee one stone " upon another.' Now that the event completely answered the pre- " diction is evident from the Jewish historian, who tells us ex- " pressly, that ' Titus having commanded his soldiers to dig up the " city, this was so fully done by levelling the whole compass of the " city, except three towers, that they who came to see it were per- " suaded it would never be built again.' The same historian in- " forms us, that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army ' com- " passed the city round about, and kept them in on every side;' and " though it was judged a great and almost impracticable work " to compass the whole city with a wall, ' yet Titus animating " his soldiers to attempt it, they in three days built a wall " of thirty-nine furlongs, having thirteen castles on it, and so " cut off all hopes that any of the Jews within the city should " escape.'

" In the 21st chapter of St. Luke, Christ speaking of the de- " struction of Jerusalem, says (ver. 11.) ' and great earthquakes shall " be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, " and great signs shall there be from heaven.'

" Now, to omit the frequent earthquakes that happened in other " places in the times of Claudius and Nero, Josephus informs us, " that there happened in Judea and Jerusalem ' an immense tempest " and vehement winds with rain, and frequent lightnings and dread- " ful thundering, and extreme roarings of the quaking earth, which " manifested to all that the world was disturbed at the destruction

* Mark xiii. 2.

† See, for this and most of the following articles, Dr. Whitby's General Preface, which, together with his other Preface, I would recommend to the perusal of all those who read for the sake of learning the truth, and not for amusement only.

" of

" of men;' and that these prodigies portended no small mischiefs.
" Josephus hath a particular chapter of the manifest signs of the ap-
" proaching desolation of the Jews; which Tacitus, a Roman his-
" torian of that age, almost epitomizes in these words: ' armies
" seemed to meet in the clouds, and glittering weapons were there
" seen; the temple seemed to be in a flame, with fire issuing from
" the clouds, and a voice more than human was heard, declaring
" that the deities were quitting the place; which was attended with
" the sound of a great motion, as if they were departing.' Josephus
" adds, what Tacitus also touches upon, that the great gate of the
" temple, which twenty men could scarcely shut, and which was
" made fast by bolts and bars, ' was seen to open of its own accord:
" that a sword appeared hanging over the city: that a comet was seen
" pointing down upon it for a whole year together: and that, before
" the sun went down, there were seen armies in battle-array, and
" chariots compassing the country, and investing the cities; a
" thing so strange,' saith he, ' that it would pass for a fable, were
" there not men living to attest it.' So particular an account have
" we of the fearful sights and signs from heaven mentioned by our
" Lord.

" Our blessed Lord is as express in the predictions of the miseries
" which should befall that sinful nation; miseries so great, as to ad-
" mit no parallel. ' * There shall be,' saith he, ' great tribulation,
" such as never happened from the beginning of the world to this
" time.' Which words Josephus seems to have transcribed, when
" he says, ' never was any nation more wicked, nor ever did a ci-
" ty suffer as they did.' Nay, in another place, he goes so far as
" to say, ' all the miseries which all mankind had suffered from the
" beginning of the world were not to be compared with those the
" Jewish nation did then suffer.' And, indeed, the account he gives
" of the number who perished in that siege is almost incredible;
" and much more so is what the Talmud and other Jewish writers
" mention of the slaughter which Hadrian's army made of them
" fifty-two years after, when they rebelled under Barchochebas, and
" were besieged in the city Bitter. And yet our Saviour having
" farther said, that † ' where-ever the carcass was [i. e. the Jews],
" there should the eagles [i. e. the Roman armies] be gathered toge-
" ther;' they were accordingly harrassed and destroyed throughout
" the Roman empire. ' When,' saith Josephus, ' the Romans had
" no enemies left in Judea, the danger reached to many of them
" living the remotest from it:' for many of them perished at Alexan-
" dria, at Cyrene, and in other cities of Ægypt, to the number of
" sixty thousand, in all the cities of Syria. In a word, Eleazar, in
" Josephus, having reckoned many places where they were cruelly
" slaughtered, concludes with saying, ' it would be too long to speak
" of all these places in particular.'

" Again: our Saviour adds, that ' they should be led captives in-
" to all nations.' Accordingly, Josephus informs us, that ' the

* Matt. xxiv. 21. † Matt. xxiv. 28.

" number of Jewish captives was ninety-seven thousand:' that of " them 'Titus sent many to Ægypt, and most of them he dis- " persed into the Roman provinces;' and so exactly fulfilled this pre- " diction."

The duration of the calamity of the Jews, and their restoration, are signified in these words: * " Jerusalem shall be trodden down of " the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." " This " so exactly came to pass, that Vespasian commanded the whole land " of Judea to be sold to those Gentiles that would buy it; and Ha- " drian, about sixty three years after, made a law, that 'no Jew " should come into the region round about Jerusalem,' as Aristo " Pellæus, who was himself a Jew, and flourished in the very time " of Hadrian, relates. 'Thus,' saith Eusebius, 'it came to pass, " that the Jews being banished thence, and there being a conflux " thither of Aliens, it became a city and colony of the Romans, and " was in honour of the emperor [Hadrian] named Ælia.' Jerusa- " lem, saith Christ, 'shall be thus trodden down †,' or subject to " the Gentiles, 'till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;' that is, " till by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, the fulness " of the Gentiles to be converted to it should come in with them: " 'for blindness,' saith the ‡ apostle, 'hath happened to the Jews, " till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and then all Israel " shall be saved;' and with them also the yet Heathen Gentiles. 'For " if,' saith he §, 'the casting away of the Jews was the reconciling " of the world, what shall the receiving of them be to it, but even " life from the dead?' and again ‖, 'if the fall of them were the " riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the " Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness be the fulness of the " Gentiles?' Now here it is especially observable, that Julian the " apostate, designing to defeat this prophecy of Christ, resolved on the " rebuilding of the city and the temple of Jerusalem in its old sta- " tion, which was till his time left in ruins, Ælia being built with- " out the circuit of it. For in his epistle to the community of the " Jews he writes thus: 'the holy city of Jerusalem, which you " have so long desired to see inhabited, rebuilding by my own la- " bours, I will dwell in.' Thus he began with an endeavour to " build that temple, in which alone the Jews would offer up their " prayers and sacrifices: but the immediate hand of providence soon " forced the workmen to desist from that unhappy enterprize. Am- " mianus Marcellinus, an Heathen, who lived in those very times, " gives us the story thus: that 'Julian endeavoured to rebuild the " temple at Jerusalem with vast expence, and gave it in charge to " Alypius of Antioch to hasten the work and to the governor of " the province to assist him in it; in which work when Alypius was " earnestly employed, and the governor of the province was assisting, " terrible balls of flame bursting forth near the foundations with " frequent insults, and burning divers times the workmen, rendered

* Luke xxi. 24.

† The Greek word is πατουμένη, possessed and trodden by the feet of the Gentiles.

‡ Rom. xi. 25, 26.

§ Ibid. ver. 15.

‖ Ver. 12.

" the

" the place inacceſſible; and thus the fire obſtinately repelling them, " the work ceaſed.

" The ſtory is very ſignal, and remarkable for many circum- " ſtances; as, 1ſt, the perſons that relate; Ammianus Marcellinus an " Heathen; Zemuch David a Jew, who confeſſes that Julian was " 'divinitus impeditus,' hindered by God in this attempt; Nazi- " anzen and Chryſoſtom among the Greeks; St. Ambroſe and Ruf- " finus among the Latins, who flouriſhed at the very time when this " was done; Theodoret and Sozomen, orthodox hiſtorians; Phi- " loſtorgius, an Arian; Socrates, a favourer of the Novatians, who " writ the ſtory within the ſpace of fifty years after the thing " was done, and whilſt the eye-witneſſes of the fact were yet ſur- " viving.

" 2dly, The time when it was performed; not in the reign of " Chriſtian emperors, but of the moſt bitter enemies of Chriſtians, " when they were forced to hide, and had not liberty of ſpeaking for " themſelves. Obſerve,

" 3dly, With what confidence Chriſtians urge this matter of fact " againſt the Jews, as a convincing demonſtration of the expiration " of their legal worſhip, and of the certainty of Chriſtian faith " againſt the Heathen philoſophers, inquiring 'what the wiſe " men of the world can ſay to theſe things:' and againſt the " emperor Theodoſius, to deter him from requiring them to " rebuild a ſynagogue, which had been lately burnt by a Chriſtian " biſhop.

" 4thly and laſtly, The unqueſtionable evidence of the thing: " 'This,' ſay the Chriſtians, 'all men freely do believe and ſpeak of: " 'tis in the mouths of all men, and is not denied even by the " Atheiſts themſelves; and if it ſeem yet incredible to any one, he " may repair for the truth of it, both to the witneſſes of it yet " living, and to them who have heard it from their mouths; yea, " they may view the foundations lying ſtill bare and naked; and, " if you aſk the reaſon, you will meet with no other account, beſides " that which I have given; and of this all we Chriſtians are witneſſes, " theſe things being done not long ſince in our own time.' So St. " Chryſoſtom."

The reader, who is inclined to ſee many particulars of the predic- tions of our Saviour, which relate to this remarkable cataſtrophe, and which I have omitted for brevity's ſake, and how they were verified by the event, will do well to conſult Dr. Whitby's preface, from whence the above articles are taken.

The obſervations I have to make on theſe prophecies are as follow:

1ſt, The common objection made to prophecies in general, that they are ſo obſcure and figurative as not to be expounded but by the event, cannot be urged againſt theſe, which are con- ceived in words as ſimple and intelligible as thoſe made uſe of by the hiſtorian, who relates the events correſponding with them.

2dly, It is very remarkable, that, of the four evangelists, St. John alone, who is said to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem, makes no mention either of these prophecies or their accomplishment. Of the other three, in whose Gospels they are to be found, St. Matthew and St. Mark died confessedly before that period; the time of St. Luke's death is uncertain. May we not then from hence very fairly conclude, that this remarkable silence of the beloved disciple, with regard to prophecies of such importance to the credit of his Lord and his religion, was ordered from above, lest unbelievers should say, what some had said of the predictions of Daniel, that they were written after the event?

3dly, As to the prediction relating to the duration of the calamity of the Jewish people and their restoration, though that is the only one of all those above-cited, not yet perfectly accomplished, I beg leave however to observe, that not only the miraculous defeating of the emperor Julian's attempt to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, but the present extraordinary condition of the Jews, is such a warrant and proof, that this prophecy also will have its accomplishment in due time, as cannot fail of powerfully striking those who will open their eyes to view it. To induce the unobserving and unthinking people of this age to do this, and to assist them in considering this living evidence of the truth of Christianity, which lies within their notice, and even at their very doors, I shall lay before them some observations of an excellent * French author upon this subject, whom I chuse rather to translate then to give his arguments in my own words.

§ 29. "† But neither the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, "nor the general contempt into which they are fallen, are so extraordinary, as their preservation for so many ages, notwithstanding this "their dispersion throughout the earth, and the universal contempt "which all nations have for them.

"Without a singular providence, a people disunited, and "divided into an infinite number of distinct families, banished "into countries, whose language and customs were different "from theirs, must have been mingled and confounded with other "nations, and all traces of them must these many ages past have "entirely disappeared,

"For they not only subsist no longer in a body politick, but there "is not a single city, where they are allowed to live according to "their own laws, or to create magistrates of their own; neither are "they held together by any publick exercise of religion. Their priests "are without employment, their sacrifices are suppressed. Their feasts "cannot be solemnized but in one only place, and to that they are not "permitted to repair.

"By what miracle then have they been preserved amid so many "nations, without any of those means which keep other people "united? How comes it to pass, that having been scattered like so "many imperceptible grains of dust, among all nations, they have

* Principes de la Foy Chrêtienne, tom. i. ch. 16.

† See the preceding chapter.

notwith-

" notwithſtanding been able to ſubſiſt longer than any, and even to
" ſurvive the extinction of them all?

" Who can at this day pick out the antient Romans from the
" numerous crowds of people, who have thrown themſelves into
" Italy? Who can point out one ſingle family of old Gaul, from
" thoſe of another original? Who can make the like ſeparation in
" Spain, between the antient Spaniards, and Goths who conquered
" it? The face of the world is changed, both in the Eaſt and Weſt;
" and all nations are mixed and blended in a hundred different man-
" ners; it is only upon conjectures, and thoſe oftentimes very frivo-
" lous, that a ſingle family can trace up its original beyond the pub-
" lick revolutions of the ſtate.

" But the Jews, by a tradition which no calamity, whether
" publick or private, hath been able to interrupt, can go back as
" far as the ancient ſtock of Abraham. They may be miſtaken in
" allotting themſelves to this or that tribe, becauſe ſince their diſ-
" perſion they have not any publick regiſters (which by the way
" is a proof that their law is aboliſhed, ſince neither the Prieſts nor
" Levites can aſcertain by any certain monuments that they are of
" the family of Aaron, and of the tribe of Levi); but every father
" hath taken care to tell his children, that he had an original different
" from that of the Gentiles; and that he deſcended from the Patri-
" archs, who are celebrated in the Scriptures.

" The general contempt into which they have fallen ſhould, one
" would think, have induced them to confound themſelves with
" thoſe people, under whoſe dominion they lived, and to ſuppreſs
" every thing that tended to diſtinguiſh them. By ſeparating them-
" ſelves from thoſe who were in power, they only drew upon
" themſelves their hatred and deriſion. In many places they ex-
" poſed themſelves to death, by bearing the exterior mark of circum-
" ciſion. Every human intereſt led them to efface the ignominious
" ſtain of their original.

" They ſaw every day their Meſſiah ſtill farther removed from
" them; that the promiſes of their doctors about his ſpeedy mani-
" feſtations were falſe; that the predictions of the prophets, whom
" they could now no longer underſtand, were covered with obſcurity;
" that all the ſupputations of time either terminated in Jeſus Chriſt,
" or were without a period; that ſome among them loſt all hope,
" and fell into incredulity with regard to the Scriptures.

" And yet, notwithſtanding all this, they ſtill ſubſiſt, they multi-
" ply, they remain viſibly ſeparated from all other people; and, in
" ſpite of the general averſion, in ſpite of the efforts of all thoſe
" nations who hate them, and who have them in their power,
" in ſpite of every human obſtacle, they are preſerved by a ſuper-
" natural protection, which hath not in like manner preſerved any
" other nation of the earth.

" One muſt ſurely have very little ſenſe of what ought to give one
" aſtoniſhment and admiration, if this prodigy does not ſtrike one;

" and one muſt have a ſtrange idea of the providence of God, to " think he had no hand in all this.

" But the Holy Spirit was not willing to leave us under any un- " certainty upon this head; and hath declared to us by his prophets, " that the preſervation of the Jews is his work. ' Fear thou not, " O Jacob, my Servant, ſaith the Lord, for I am with thee, for " I will make a full end of all the nations, whither I have " driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but cor- " rect thee in meaſure, yet will I not leave thee wholly un- " puniſhed *.

" This promiſe was made to the old Patriarchs, to whom God " hath reſerved children, heirs of their faith, and to the remnant " of Iſrael, who in the end of the ages ſhall believe in Jeſus " Chriſt.

" It is for their ſakes that the unworthy poſterity of the un- " believing is ſuffered; and it is to maintain the communication " between the firſt fathers and their lateſt ſucceſſors, that the nation " is preſerved notwithſtanding their iniquity, and in the midſt of " puniſhments that threatened to overwhelm them.

" But let it be obſerved, that this promiſe was made to the na- " tion of the Jews only; that all others ſhall be either extermi- " nated or ſo confounded with each other, as to be no longer diſ- " tinguiſhed; and that it is the efficacy of the word of God, which " preſerves the Jews amidſt every thing that in all appearance would " otherwiſe have ſunk them entirely, and ſwallowed them up.

" ' Thus ſaith the Lord, if my covenant be not with day and " night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and " earth; Then will I caſt away the ſeed of Jacob and David my Ser- " vant;——for I will cauſe their captivity to return, and have mercy " on them †.' This I ſay is the promiſe, and the end of the " promiſe. The Jews ſhall one day be recalled through mercy; " and for the ſake of thoſe who ſhall one day be recalled, the " patience of God ſuffers all the reſt, and his power preſerves " them.

" ' Thus ſaith the Lord, which giveth the ſun for a light by day, " and the ordinances of the moon and of the ſtars for a light by night, " which divideth the ſea, when the waves thereof roar; the Lord " of Hoſts is his name. If thoſe ordinances depart from before me, " ſaith the Lord, then the ſeed of Iſrael alſo ſhall ceaſe from being " a nation before me for ever. Thus ſaith the Lord, if Heaven above " can be meaſured, and the foundations of the earth ſearched out " beneath, I will alſo cut off all the ſeed of Iſrael, for all that they have " done, ſaith the Lord ‡.'

" That is to ſay, heaven and earth ſhall paſs away ſooner than " the Jews ſhall ceaſe to be a diſtinct people. The ſame power, " which hath given laws to nature, watches over their preſervation. " And the unheard-of crime, which they have committed in cruci-

* Jerem. xxx. 10. 11. † Jerem. xxxiii. 25, 26. ‡ Jerem. xxxi 35, 36, 37.

fying

" fying the Saviour promiſed to their fathers, and which hath filled " up the meaſure of their former iniquity, will not move God to " retract his promiſe, and to reject entirely, and without reſource, " the poſterity of Jacob.

" With what light were the prophets illuminated to preſume to " ſpeak in ſo great and lofty a ſtrain of a thing ſo little probable as " the duration of a people, weak, diſperſed, univerſally hated, and " guilty of the greateſt of all crimes!

" Who would queſtion the other prophecies, after ſeeing the ac- " compliſhment of this? What more aſtoniſhing proof can any one " deſire of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, than theſe two events " joined together, the diſperſion of the Jews into all nations, and " their preſervation for ſixteen hundred years? One of theſe things " taken ſeparately and by itſelf was incredible; and they became " ſtill more ſo by being united; but both theſe prodigies were " neceſſary to prove that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah.

" It was neceſſary that thoſe who had rejected him ſhould be " baniſhed into all regions, ſhould into all parts carry with them the " Scriptures, and ſhould every where be covered with ignominy.

" But that the promiſes made their fathers might be accompliſhed, " it was neceſſary that their baniſhed family ſhould be recalled, and " that their blindneſs being diſſipated, they ſhould adore him, whom * " Abraham had deſired to ſee, and whom he had adored with a holy " tranſport of joy and gratitude.

" The Jews puniſhed and diſperſed bear witneſs to Jeſus Chriſt. " The Jews recalled and converted will render him a teſtimony " ſtill more awful and ſtriking. The Jews preſerved by a continual " miracle, that they may preſerve to Jeſus Chriſt the ſtock and ſuc- " ceſſion of thoſe who ſhall one day believe in him, bear witneſs to " him continually.

" Had they been only puniſhed, they would have proved his " juſtice only: had they only been preſerved, they could have " proved nothing but his power. Had they not been reſerved to " worſhip him one day, they could not have proved his mercy and " fidelity, nor have made him any reparation for their outrageous " crimes.

" Their diſperſion proves that he is come, but they have rejected " him: their preſervation demonſtrates that he hath not rejected " them for ever, and that they ſhall one day believe in him; and " they declare by both that he is the Meſſiah, and the promiſed " Saviour; that their miſeries proceed from their not having " known him; and that the only hope they have left is, that they " ſhall one day come to the knowledge of him.

" We ought not to demand why God ſupports them ſo long thout enlightening them; and why he leaves ſo great an inter- " val between the faithful fathers, and the children that will hereafter " become ſo too. To pretend to examine the impenetrable judg-

* John viii. 56.

" ments

" ments of God, and the abyſſes of his wiſdom, is to pre-
" tend to ' meaſure the height of heaven, and to ſearch out the
" foundations of the earth.' * God hath ſet bounds to the incre-
" dulity of the Jews, and to the ingratitude of the Gentiles: his
" mercy and his juſtice ſucceed each other; and no one knows at
" what time he will execute what he hath promiſed to the lateſt poſ-
" terity of Iſrael, although his promiſes are infallible.

" † Thus ' ſaith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he
" that formed thee, O Iſrael: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;
" I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou
" paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the
" rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee. When thou walkeſt
" through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame
" kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring
" thy ſeed from the Eaſt, and gather thee from the Weſt. I will
" ſay to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back:
" Bring my ſons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the
" earth: even every one that is called by my name. For I have
" created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea I have made
" him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf
" that have ears.

" This prophecy, truly admirable in all its parts, is addreſſed to
" Jacob, the head of the tribes of Iſrael, and the heir of the promiſes
" of the Meſſiah and Salvation.

" His poſterity is diſperſed into all the Quarters of the world.
" This is the ſtate of the Jews ſince the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.

" Their diſperſion is the puniſhment of their ſpiritual deafneſs
" and blindneſs. And with how great a blindneſs, with how
" great a deafneſs, may one not deſervedly reproach the Jews,
" for not having known Jeſus Chriſt, and not having heard
" him, though he proved his divine miſſion by an infinity of
" miracles!

" Their condition ſeems deſperate: the waters are ready to
" over-whelm them; the flames ſurround them on all ſides; but
" the protection of God follows them throughout, and delivers
" them.

" This protection is vouchſafed to the whole body of the nation,
" in favour of thoſe who ſhall one day call upon that name which
" the reſt have diſhonoured with their blaſphemies.

" God out of mere mercy will give a docile and faithful heart
" to thoſe who ſhall renounce their former incredulity. They
" will be the creatures of his grace, to which alone they will ſtand
" indepted for their repentance and return.

" They will not then begin to ſee a new object; but an object
" which their blindneſs had concealed from them. They will not
" then hear a teacher, who began but a few days before to make his
" appearance, but one whom their voluntary and obſtinate deafneſs
" had kept them from hearing before.

* Rom. xi. 32. 33. † Iſaiah xliii, 1—8.

" The

" The change will be in their perſons, and not in his religion; " that will remain what it is, but they will then begin to ſee it. " Jeſus Chriſt will take away the veil that is upon their eyes; but " he will be the ſame. He will cure their deafneſs; but he will " ſpeak the ſame things.

" It is evident, then, that the Jews are preſerved for him; and " that the whole body of the nation ſubſiſts only by the efficacy " of that promiſe which is to lead the remains of Iſrael to Jeſus " Chriſt: Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf " that have ears."

Can any one, after reading theſe ſeveral prophecies above quoted, queſtion the veracity of the ſacred writers; who, by publiſhing them in this manner, put their maſter's credit and their own upon contigencies very remote, and ſeemingly improbable? And doth not the axact accompliſhment of theſe, and ſeveral other predictions, which might have been produced, ſufficiently eſtabliſh the authority of the Scriptures, and aſcertain the truth of all the facts related in them?

§ 30. I come now to conſider the ſecond argument to induce us to believe that Chriſt roſe from the dead, viz. The exiſtence of the Chriſtian religion.

From the exiſtence of the Chriſtian religion, may be drawn the ſame kind of evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and the wonders attending it, as is exhibited to us of the deluge by the many petrifactions of ſhells and bones of fiſhes, and other animals of diſtant regions, &c. found often in the bottoms of the deepeſt mines, and the bowels of the higheſt mountains; for, as it is impoſſible to account for thoſe various petrifactions being lodged in ſo many parts of the earth, ſome many leagues diſtant from the ſea, others very much above the level of it, without admitting ſuch a ſubverſion and confuſion of this globe, as could not have been occaſioned by a leſs violent cauſe than the " breaking up the fountains of the great deep, " and the waters flowing above the tops of the higheſt hills;" ſo will it, I apprehend, be extremely difficult to account for the propagation and preſent exiſtence of Chriſtianity in ſo many regions of the world, without ſuppoſing that Chriſt roſe from the dead, aſcended into heaven, and enabled his diſciples, by the miraculous gifts of his Holy Spirit, to ſurmount ſuch obſtacles as no mere human abilities could poſſibly overcome. In the former caſe, a cauſe ſuperior to the ordinary operations of nature muſt be aſſigned for the production of effects plainly above, and contrary to thoſe operations; and for a ſolution of the latter, recourſe in like manner muſt be had to an agent of power and wiſdom tranſcending and controlling the natural faculties and wiſdom of man; and this cauſe, this agent, can be no other than the great Law-giver of nature, the All-wiſe, and All-mighty Creator of heaven and earth. He alone could " break up the fountains of the great deep, open " the windows of heaven, and cover the whole earth with water;" that is, bring on that univerſal deluge which alone furniſhes us with

with a ſolution of many phænomena, otherwiſe unaccountable; and he alone could break the jaws of death, and the priſon of the grave, "open the kingdom of heaven," and ſhower down upon mortals ſuch mighty gifts and powers, as are the only adequate cauſes thar can be aſſigned of the aſtoniſhing and preter-natural birth and increaſe of Chriſtianity. This will not appear exaggerated, if we conſider the difficulties the Goſpel had to ſtruggle with at its firſt apprarance, and the inabilities, the human inabilities I mean, of its firſt preachers, to oppoſe and overcome thoſe obſtacles.

The difficulties they had to encounter were no leſs than the ſuperſtition, the prejudices, and the vices of the whole world; difficulties of ſo much the harder conqueſt, as being derived, though by corruption from good principles, namely, the religion, the nature, and the reaſon of mankind. How powerful an oppoſition all theſe formed againſt the Goſpel will beſt appear from a ſhort view of the ſtate of the world under the firſt ages of Chriſtianity.

The Jews, though poſſeſſed of a body of laws framed, as they acknowledged, by God himſelf, had, however, by liſtening to the comments and traditions of the ſcholaſtic and caſuiſtical Scribes and Rabbins, ſo far departed from the ſpirit and intention of their lawgiver, as to place almoſt the whole of their religon in the obſervance of ritual purities and ceremonies, to the neglect of the "greater "and weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith *; which, as our Saviour told them, they ought to have regarded, and not to have diſregarded the others: that is, the Jews were fallen from true religion into a ſuperſtition, which differed from that of the Gentiles principally, in that the Gentiles worſhiped a number of deities, the Jews acknowledged and worſhiped one alone; but ſtill they worſhiped him ſuperſtitiouſly, with exterior ſervices only, ablutions, ſacrifices, obſervation of days, and other ceremonial duties; not perceiving, or not remembering, the great and wiſe end of thoſe ceremonial inſtitutions; which, by not allowing any forms of worſhip but thoſe preſcribed by the law, and not admitting to that worſhip any but thoſe who by circumciſion would become perfect Iſraelites, not only tended to keep them from being mingled with the Gentiles, and learning from them their idolatrous polytheiſm, by which means that fundamental article of all true religion, the belief of one God, though loſt in all other nations, was for many centuries preſerved among the Jews; but by the faſts and feſtivals, the purifications, offerings, and propitiatory ſacrifices appointed in the ritual, put them perpetually in mind of the duties of prayer and thankſgiving to God; of the importance of moral purity, the obligation of repentance, and the neceſſity of an expiation for ſin. But as holineſs of life was of more difficult practice than the obſervation of ceremonies, numerous and burthenſome as they ſeem to have been, they ſoon became willing to commute; and, repoſing their chief hopes of obtaining the favour and protection of

* Matth. xxiii. 23.

God

God in their compliance with the ceremonial law, they turned their attention principally to that; and attached themſelves to it ſo ſtrongly, that though they did not ſcruple to commit a thouſand immoralities, they would ſooner die than eat any unclean meats, or ſuffer their temple to be profaned.

From this attachment to what they eſteemed the law of Moſes, they preſumed upon the ſpecial favour and protection of God, and looked upon themſelves as ſole heirs of the promiſes made to Abraham and David, and repeated and confirmed by all their prophets. But the ſame blindneſs that with-held them from ſeeing the ſpiritual intent and meaning of the ceremonial inſtitutions, kept them likewiſe from underſtanding the ſpiritual ſenſe of thoſe prophecies. The bleſſing, therefore, promiſed through the ſeed of Abraham to "all "the nations of the earth," and the kingdom ſtipulated to the poſterity of David, they prepoſterouſly interpreted to belong to themſelves alone; and expounding the deliverance of Iſrael intimated by the prophets, and the victories and dominion of the Son of David, in a carnal ſenſe, they expected, at the time of Chriſt's coming, a Meſſiah, who ſhould not only deliver them from their ſubjection to the Romans, but even conquer and ſubdue them, and all the other powers of the earth, to the empire of the Jews, the ſole favourites of heaven, and deſtined lords of the univerſe, under their invincible glorious king. Theſe expectations, ſo flattering to the whole nation, had ſo infected the minds of all orders and degrees, that even the diſciples of Jeſus, who were (ſome of them at leaſt) of the loweſt of the people, were a long while tainted with them, notwithſtanding the ſpiritual inſtructions, and plain declarations of their maſter to the contrary. And though, ſoon after his aſcenſion, they ſeem to have given up all thoughts of a temporal kingdom, yet could they not for ſome time, nor without an expreſs miracle, be convinced that the Gentiles had any title to the mercies of God, or any ſhare in the kingdom of the Meſſiah. Such was the ſuperſtition, and ſuch the prejudices, of the whole Jewiſh nation.

To theſe national prejudices may be added others ariſing from the peculiar tenets of the different ſects, that divided among them almoſt the whole people of the Jews. The moſt powerful of theſe were the Phariſees and Sadducees; of whoſe chief doctrines ſome notice is taken by the evangeliſts, as well as of their rancorous oppoſition to the Goſpel of Chriſt. The reader, who is deſirous of ſeeing a more particular account of the opinions of theſe, and the other ſects, may conſult the Univerſal Hiſtory *. It may be ſufficient to obſerve here, that they had all of them many followers, had great authority with the people, and had, eſpecially the Phariſees, a large ſhare in the government of the Jewiſh ſtate. And though there was a conſtant hatred and rivalry between them, and conſequently ſo great a zeal in each for the advancement of their particular opinions, that they "would compaſs heaven and earth to gain one

* Vol. IV. p. 163, & ſeq.

" proſelyte," yet they all agreed with the ſame ardour to oppoſe the progreſs of Chriſtianity.

The idolatrous ſuperſtitions of the Heathen world, and the zealous attachment of every nation and city to the worſhip of their reſpective tutelary Deities, are too well known to be enlarged upon in this place: but I muſt obſerve, that, beſides the prejudices of the ignorant and biggotted multitude, there ſprung up from theſe ſuperſtitions other obſtacles to Chriſtianity no leſs formidable, though of a different kind: for many religious rites and ceremonies having, either by preſcription, or the policy of legiſlators, been mixed and interwoven with the adminiſtration of civil affairs, the worſhip of the Gods was become not only an eſſential part of the conſtitution, but the great engine of government in moſt ſtates and kingdoms. Thus, among the Greeks and other nations, omens and oracles; among the Romans, auſpices, auguries, and ſacrifices, either of thankſgiving, or propitiation; were often very ſucceſsfully employed upon great and important occaſions: on which account, all the Roman emperors, who had appropriated to themſelves the authority of the whole empire, formerly divided among ſeveral officers, after the examples of Julius Cæſar and Auguſtus, either actually took upon them the office, or at leaſt the title of " Pontifex Maximus," chief prieſt; that is, according to the definition of Feſtus, " Judex " atque arbiter rerum humanarum divinarumque;" the judge and arbitrator of human and divine affairs. And hence thoſe wiſe, as wells as humane emperors, Trajan and the Two Antonines, might poſſibly think themſelves under a double obligation, as chief magiſtrates and chief prieſts, of perſecuting the Chriſtians, whom they apparently conſidered as innovators with regard to the conſtitution, as well as religion of the empire. This, though no ſufficient excuſe for ſuch barbarous and inhuman proceedings, may ſerve, however, to leſſen the aſtoniſhment we are apt to fall into, upon hearing that ſo virtuous a religion as that of the Chriſtians was perſecuted by ſo virtuous a prince as Antoninus the Philoſopher; though it muſt at the ſame time be acknowledged, that there was in him a great mixture of ſuperſtition, however incompatible that is thought to be with philoſophy. This may alſo ſerve to ſhew us the diſtreſsful ſituation of Chriſtianity, againſt whoſe progreſs not only the ſuperſtitious zeal of the multitude, the laws and policy of almoſt every ſtate and kingdom, but the ſeeming duty of even good and juſt magiſtrates, were fatally combined.

If, to politic and pious princes, religion and the laws of the ſtate might ſerve for a reaſon or pretence for oppoſing Chriſtianity, to wicked emperors there was yet another motive diſtinct from any conſideration either of duty or policy, or even of their vices; and that was, their own divinity. After all the power and dignity of the Roman people, and their ſeveral magiſtrates, was devolved upon the ſingle perſon of the emperor, the ſenators, by a tranſition natural enough to ſlaves, from counſellors becoming flatterers, had not only eſtabliſhed by law the abſolute authority of their tyrants,

but

but ſo far conſecrated their perſons, even in their life-time, as to erect altars to their names, to place their ſtatues among thoſe of the Gods, and to offer to them ſacrifices and incenſe. Though theſe impious honours were conferred upon all alike without any diſtinction of good or bad; yet the latter, not being able from their own merit to acquire to themſelves any reſpect or veneration, had nothing to ſtand upon but the power and prerogatives of their office; of which, therefore, they became ſo jealous, as to make it dangerous for any one to neglect paying them thoſe outward honours, however extravagant and profane, which either the laws or their own mad pride required. And hence adoring the image of the emperors, ſwearing by their names, &c. became a mark and teſt of fidelity, with which all who ſought their favour, or feared their power, moſt religiouſly complied; all thoſe eſpecially who held any magiſtracy under them, or governed the provinces. And theſe, by their offices, were yet farther obliged to take care, that, within the limits of their juriſdiction, that moſt eſſential part of the duty of ſubjects to bad princes, exterior reſpect and veneration, was moſt punctually paid. Now, as the doctrines of Chriſt were entirely oppoſite to all kinds of idolatry, Chriſtians were by this teſt, with which they could by no means comply, rendered liable to the guilt of that kind of treaſon which tyrants and their miniſters never pardon, how apt ſoever they may be to overlook crimes againſt religion or the ſtate. And that this teſt was among others made uſe of againſt the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, even in the beſt reigns, is evident from a paſſage in the famous epiſtle of Pliny to Trajan, in which he relates his manner of proceeding with thoſe who offered to clear themſelves of the charge or ſuſpicion of being Chriſtians, in the following words *: "Propoſitus eſt libellus ſine auctore, "multorum nomina continens, qui negarent ſe eſſe Chriſtianos, "aut fuiſſe: cum præeunte me Deos appellarent, & imagini tuæ "(quam propter hoc juſſeram cum ſimulacris numinum afferri) "thure ac vino ſupplicarent; præterea maledicerent Chriſto; quo-"rum nihil cogi poſſe dicuntur, qui ſunt revera Chriſtiani. Ergo "dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati, eſſe ſe Chriſtianos "dixerunt, & mox negaverunt; fuiſſe quidem, ſed deſiiſſe; qui-"dam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos: non nemo etiam "ante viginti quoque. Omnes, & imaginem tuam, deorumque "ſimulacra, venerati ſunt; ii & Chriſto maledixerunt. A paper "was ſet forth, without a name, containing a liſt of many people, "who denied that they either were or ever had been Chriſtians. "Now theſe perſons having, after my example, invocated the "Gods, 'and with wine and incenſe payed their devotions to "your image (which I had cauſed to be brought forth for that "purpoſe, with the images of the Gods'), and having moreover "blaſphemed Chriſt ('any one of which things it is ſaid no real "Chriſtian can be compelled to do'), I thought proper to diſmiſs "them. Others, who had been informed againſt, confeſſed that

* Epiſt. xcvii. l. 10.

" they were once Chriſtians, but denied their being ſo now, ſay-
" ing they had quitted that religion, ſome three years, others more,
" and ſome few even twenty years ago. All theſe ' worſhiped
" both your image, and thoſe of the Gods, and did alſo blaſpheme
" Chriſt."

To theſe powerful patrons of ſuperſtition, and enemies of the goſpel, may be added others, whoſe authority, though inferior and ſubſervient to the former, at leaſt within the limits of the Roman empire, was, however, of very great and extenſive influence; I mean the prieſts, diviners, augurs, and managers of oracles, with all the ſubordinate attendants upon the temples and worſhip of almoſt an infinite number of deities; and many trades, if not entirely depending upon that worſhip, yet very much encouraged and enriched by it, ſuch as ſtatuaries, ſhrine-makers, breeders of victims, dealers in frankincenſe, &c. All of whom were by intereſt, to ſay nothing of religion, ſtrongly devoted to idolatry.

It may not be improper alſo, under the article of religion, to mention the Circenſian, and other ſpectacles exhibited among the Romans, the four great games of Greece, the Olympian, Pythian, Iſthmian, and Nemean; with many others of the ſame kind, celebrated with great magnificence in every country, and almoſt in every city of Greece both in Europe and Aſia; all of which were ſo many religious feſtivals, which by the allurements of pomp and pleaſure, not to mention the glory and advantages acquired by the conquerors in thoſe games, attached many to the cauſe of ſuperſtition.

But ſuperſtition, univerſal and powerful as it was, by its union with the intereſts and pleaſures of a conſiderable part of mankind, was not the only nor the greateſt obſtacle that Chriſtianity had to contend with. Vice leagued againſt it a ſtill greater number. The ambitious and luxurious, the debauched and lewd, the miſer and extortioner, the unjuſt and oppreſſive, the proud and the revengeful, the fraudulent and rapacious, were all foes to a religion, that taught humility and moderation, temperance and purity even of thought, liberality and clemency, juſtice, benevolence, and meekneſs, the forgiving of injuries, and " the doing that only to others, " which we would have them to do to us." Virtues agreeable indeed to reaſon, and diſcoverable in part by the clear light of nature; but the difficulty lay in the bringing thoſe to hear reaſon, who had abandoned themſelves to ſuperſtition. And how was the almoſt extinguiſhed ray of nature to be perceived, among the many falſe and glaring lights of religion, opinion, and philoſophy, which recommended and ſanctified many enormous vices? The Gods, like diſſolute and deſpotic princes, who have often been very properly compared to them, were themſelves the great patrons and examples of tyranny, lewdneſs, and revenge, and almoſt all kinds of vice. And opinion had magnified Alexander, and deified Julius Cæſar, for an ambition, which ought to have rendered them the object of the deteſtation and curſes of all mankind.

Neither

Neither was philoſophy ſo great a friend to virtue, or enemy to vice, as ſhe pretended to be. Some philoſophers, on the contrary, denied the being, at leaſt the providence of God, and future rewards and puniſhments; and, as a juſt conſequence of that opinion, placed the felicity of mankind in the enjoyments of this world, that is, in ſenſual pleaſures. Others, affecting to doubt and queſtion every thing, took away the diſtinction of virtue and vice, and left their diſciples to follow either as their inclination directed. Theſe were, at leaſt indirectly, preachers of vice. And among thoſe who undertook to lead their diſciples to the temple of virtue, there were ſo many different, and even inconſiſtent opinions, ſome of them ſo paradoxical and abſurd, others ſo ſubtilized and myſterious, and all of them ſo erroneous in their firſt principles, and ſo defective in many great points of religion and morality, that it is no wonder that philoſophy, however venerable in her original, and noble in her pretenſions, degenerated into ſpeculation, ſophiſtry, and a ſcience of diſputation, and from a guide of life became a pedantic preſident of the ſchools, from whence aroſe another kind of adverſaries to the Goſpel: a ſet of men, who, from ſeeing farther than the vulgar, came to fancy they could ſee every thing, and to think every thing ſubject to the diſcuſſion of reaſon, and carrying their inquires into the nature of God, the production of the univerſe, and the eſſence of the human ſoul, either framed upon each of theſe, or adopted, ſome quaint or myſterious ſyſtem, by which they pretended to account for all the operations of nature, and meaſure all the actions of God and man. And as every ſect had a ſyſtem peculiar to itſelf, ſo did each endeavour to advance their own upon the ruins of all the reſt; and this engaged them in a perpetual war with one another; in which, for want of real ſtrength and ſolid arguments, they were reduced to defend themſelves and attack their adverſaries with all thoſe arts which are commonly made uſe of to cover or ſupply the deficiency of ſenſe and reaſon; ſophiſtry, declamation, and ridicule, obſtinacy, pride, and rancour. Men of this turn, accuſtomed to reaſon upon topics in which reaſon is bewildered; ſo proud of the ſufficiency of reaſon, as to think they could account for every thing; ſo fond of their own ſyſtems, as to dread conviction more than error; and ſo habituated to diſpute pertinaciouſly, to aſſert boldly, and do decide magiſterially upon every queſtion, that they were almoſt incapable of any inſtruction; could not but be averſe to the receiving for their maſter a crucified Jew, and for teachers a parcel of low obſcure perſons of the ſame nation, who profeſſed to "glory in the croſs of Chriſt, to know nothing but him crucified," and to neglect and deſpiſe the ſo-much-admired wiſdom of this world, and who moreover taught points never thought of by the philoſophers, ſuch as the redemption of mankind, and the reſurrection of the dead, and who, though far from forbidding the due exerciſe of reaſon, yet confined it within its proper bounds, and exhorted their diſciples to ſubmit with all humility, and to rely with all confidence upon the wiſdom of God, inſtead of pretending to arraign

arraign his proceedings, " whoſe judgements are unſearchable, and " whoſe ways are paſt finding out."

From this view of the Jewiſh and Gentile world, it is evident that every thing that moſt ſtrongly influences and tyrannizes over the mind of man, religion, cuſtom, law, policy, pride, intereſt, vice, and even philoſophy, was united againſt the goſpel; enemies in their own nature very formidable and difficult to be ſubdued, had they even ſuffered themſelves to be attacked upon equal ground, and come to a fair engagement. But not relying upon their own ſtrength only (for prejudice and falſhood are always diffident and fearful), they intrenched themſelves behind that power, which they were in poſſeſſion of, and rendered themſelves inacceſſible, as they imagined, to Chriſtianity, by planting round them not only all kinds of civil diſcouragements, but even torments, chains, and death; terrors, which no one could deſpiſe, who had any views of ambition or intereſt, and who was not even contented to reſign what he might otherwiſe have enjoyed in peace, and without a crime, his reputation, his eaſe, his fortune, and his life. Theſe were the difficulties which Chriſtianity had to ſtruggle with for many ages, and over which ſhe at length ſo far prevailed as to change the whole face of things, overturn the temples and altars of the gods, ſilence the oracles, humble the impious pride of emperors, thoſe earthly and more powerful deities, confound the preſumptuous wiſdom of philoſophers, and introduce into the greateſt part of the known world a new principle of religion and virtue: an event apparently too unwieldly and ſtupendous to have been brought about by mere human means, though all the accompliſhments of learning, all the inſinuating and perſuaſive powers of eloquence, joined to the profoundeſt knowledge of the nature and duty of man, and a long practice and experience in the ways of the world, had all met in the apoſtles. But the apoſtles, excepting Paul, were ignorant and illiterate, bred up for the moſt part in mean occupations, natives and inhabitants of a remote province of Judea, and ſprung from a nation hated and deſpiſed by the reſt of mankind. So that allowing it poſſible, that a change ſo total and univerſal might have been effected by the natural powers and faculties of man, yet had the apoſtles none of thoſe powers, St. Paul alone excepted, who was indeed eloquent and well verſed in all the learning of the Jews; that is, in the traditions and doctrines of the Phariſees (of which ſect he was); a learning, which, inſtead of aſſiſting him in making converts to the Goſpel, gave him the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt it, and rendered him a furious perſecutor of the Chriſtians. Yet of this eloquence, and of this learning, he made no uſe in preaching the Goſpel; on the contrary, * " When I came to you," ſays he to the Corinthians, " I came not with excellency of ſpeech, " or of wiſdom, declaring to you the teſtimony of God; for I de- " termined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, " and him crucified: and I was with you in weakneſs and in fear,

* 1 Cor. ii. 1—4.

" and

" and in much trembling; and my ſpeech and my preaching was " not with enticing words of man's wiſdom." And in the preceding chapter, comparing the inſufficiency of the preachers of the Goſpel with the ſucceſs of their preaching, he attributes the latter to the true cauſe, the wiſdom and power of God, in theſe expreſſive words:—* " For Chriſt ſent me to preach the goſpel, not " with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of " none effect. For the preaching of the croſs is to them that " periſh fooliſhneſs; but unto us, who are ſaved, it is the power of " God. † For it is written, I will deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, " and will bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent. " Where is the wiſe? Where is the ſcribe? Where is the diſputer " of this world? Hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this " world? For after that in the wiſdom of God the world by wiſ- " dom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preach- " ing to ſave them that believe. For the Jews require a ſign, and " the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom. But we preach Chriſt crucified, " unto the Jews a ſtumbling block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; " but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the " power of God, and the wiſdom of God; becauſe the fooliſhneſs " of God is wiſer than men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger " than men: for you ſee your calling, brethren, that not many " wiſe men after the fleſh, nor many mighty, nor many noble, " are called. But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world " to confound the wiſe, and God hath choſen the weak things of " the world to confound the things that are mighty; and baſe things " of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen; " yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that " are, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence."

This is a true repreſentation of the condition of the firſt preachers of the Goſpel, and their oppoſers. The latter were poſſeſſed of all the wiſdom, authority, and power of the world; the former were ignorant, contemptible, and weak. Which of them, then, according to the natural courſe of human affairs, ought to have prevailed? The latter, without all doubt. And yet not the apoſtles only, but all hiſtory and our own experience aſſure us, that the ignorant, the contemptible, and the weak, gained the victory from the wiſe, the mighty, and the noble. To what other cauſe, then, can we attribute a ſucceſs ſo contrary to all the laws, by which the events of this world are governed, than to the interpoſition of God, manifeſted in the reſurrection and aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt, and the miraculous powers conferred upon his apoſtles and diſciples? a cauſe adequate to all the effects, however great and aſtoniſhing. For, with theſe ample credentials from the king of Heaven, even a poor fiſherman of Galilee might appear with dignity before the high prieſt and ſanhedrim of the Jews, aſſert boldly that " God had made that ſame " Jeſus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Chriſt," and make good his aſſertion by proving, that he was riſen from the dead, ſtrange

* 1 Cor. i. 17, 18. † Iſ. xxix. 14.

and

and ſupernatural as it might ſeem, not only by his own teſtimony and that of his brethren the apoſtles and diſciples of Jeſus, by whom he was ſeen "for forty days after his paſſion," but by innumerable inſtances of a power, ſuperior in like manner to nature, derived upon them from him, and exerciſed by them in his name. From the Scriptures alſo might the ſame ignorant and illiterate Galileans ſhew againſt the traditions of the elders, the learning of the Scribes, and the prejudices of the whole Jewiſh nation, that the humble, ſuffering Jeſus was the mighty triumphant Meſſiah, ſpoken of by the prophets; ſince if, with reference to the interpretations of thoſe prophecies, any doubt could have ariſen among the people to whoſe expoſitions they ſhould ſubmit, to thoſe of the Scribes and Elders, or thoſe of the Apoſtles; the latter had to produce, in ſupport of their authority, the atteſtation of that Holy Spirit, by whom thoſe prophets were inſpired, now ſpeaking through their mouths in all the languages of the earth. And with regard to that other point, of ſtill harder digeſtion to the Jews, namely, the calling the uncircumciſed Gentiles to an equal participation of the kingdom of God, and conſequently the aboliſhing circumciſion, and the whole ceremonial law, the apoſtles were furniſhed with an argument, to which all the Rabbins were not able to reply, by the Holy Ghoſt beſtowing upon the Gentile converts to Chriſtianity the ſame heavenly gifts as he had conferr'd at the beginning upon the believing Jews.

Inveſted with ſuch full powers from on high, might theſe ſame obſcure Jews, notwithſtanding the contempt and hatred which all other nations had for that people, undertake and accompliſh the arduous and amazing taſk of preaching the Goſpel to all the world. The belief of one God is the fundamental article of all true religion; and the unity of the Godhead is certainly diſcoverable, and even to be demonſtrated by reaſon. But this article of belief (as I have ſaid before) was not to be found in the religion of any nation, beſides the Jews; and long arguments and deductions of reaſon, by which it was to be demonſtrated, were above the capacity of the greateſt part of mankind. To prove this important truth, therefore, in a manner eaſy to be comprehended by the weakeſt, and yet not to be refuted by the ſtrongeſt underſtanding, the apoſtles and their followers were for many ages endowed, beſides all their other miraculous gifts, with a power over devils or dæmons (the only deities of the Pagans that had any real being), permitted perhaps to ſhew themſelves at that time in extraordinary operations, for the ſake of illuſtrating and proving this great truth. By this power they caſt them out of many, who were poſſeſſed by them, drove them from their temples, groves, and oracles, obliged them to confeſs their own inferiority, to acknowledge the dominion of Jeſus Chriſt, and to declare his apoſtles to be "the ſervants of the moſt high God, ſent to ſhew "mankind the way of Salvation *." This power they exerciſed in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, in order to prove his mediation and interceſſion

* Acts xvi. 17. See, for many other inſtances, Whitby's General Preface to the Epiſtles.

between God and man, the ſecond article of the Chriſtian creed. And as by this power, thus exerciſed in the name of Chriſt, the apoſtles and their followers were enabled to prove, even to the ſenſes of all mankind, that there is but one God, and one mediator; ſo from that and other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, healing all manner of diſeaſes, ſpeaking with various tongues, propheſying, &c. did they derive to themſelves authority to teach the great doctrines of Chriſtianity, repentance, remiſſion of ſins, holineſs of life, future rewards and puniſhments, and the reſurrection of the dead: of which laſt, the reſurrection of Chriſt was both an inſtance and a pledge; as the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon believers was a clear evidence of the efficacy of repentance, and the remiſſion of their ſins. And of the neceſſity of a holy life, and the certainty of future rewards and puniſhments, nothing could afford a ſtronger and more convincing argument than the lives and deaths of theſe ambaſſadors of God, who were apparently guided into all truth by his inſpiration, and who, upon the aſſurance of a bleſſed immortality, not only practiſed all the virtues they preached, but chearfully underwent all kinds of ſufferings, and even death itſelf.

After this manner were the firſt preachers of the Goſpel, weak, ignorant, and contemptible as they were, furniſhed with ſtrength ſufficient to overthrow the "ſtrong holds of Satan," the ſuperſtitions, prejudices, and vices of mankind; and by the "demonſtration of the "power of God," an argument whoſe concluſiveneſs was viſible to the dulleſt capacity, enabled to confound the ſubtilties of the moſt diſputatious, and ſurpaſs the wiſdom of the wiſeſt philoſophers, in eſtabliſhing religion upon the belief of one God, grounding the obligation to virtue upon its true principle, the command of God; and deriving the encouragement to holineſs of life from the promiſes of God, to reward thoſe who ſhould obey his will with eternal happineſs, obtained by the ſacrifice and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt. Which laſt point, together with the doctrine of providence, the free agency of man, and aſſiſting grace, how much ſoever beyond the ken of reaſon, yet could not but be admitted by all reaſonable men for certain truths, as ſtanding upon the authority of perſons viſibly commiſſioned and inſpired by God. For what concluſion of reaſon, what maxim in philoſophy, is more evident, than that "men ſpeaking by the immediate inſpiration of God, "cannot lie?" And is not the divine inſpiration of the apoſtles to be inferred with as much certainty, from the mighty wonders they performed, as the divine creation of the world from the ſtupendous beauty, order, and magnificence, of the univerſe? Every effect muſt have a cauſe; and a ſupernatural effect muſt have a cauſe ſuperior to nature; and this cauſe can be no other than God. There may be, indeed, and we are authoriſed by the Scriptures to ſay there are, many beings both good and bad, endued with faculties and powers exceeding thoſe of man: but theſe beings are, doubtleſs, limited as well as man in the exerciſe of thoſe powers, and ſubjected to laws preſcribed to them by their

great Creator; which, in reſpect to them, may be likewiſe ſtyled the laws of nature. From whence it follows, that they cannot break in upon or diſturb the laws of any other ſyſtem of creatures, though inferior to them, without the permiſſion of the Univerſal King; who, nevertheleſs, may certainly make uſe of them as inſtruments to bring about his wiſe purpoſes, even beyond the bounds of their proper ſpheres. Thus, in eſtabliſhing Chriſtianity, he thought fit to employ the miniſtration not of angels only, but of dæmons, though in ſuch a manner as to leave no doubt of their ſubjection to his ſovereignty. The angels were, upon many occaſions, aſſiſting to Chriſt and his apoſtles; the dæmons trembled, and fled at their command; and both of them, thoſe by their ſubſerviency, and theſe by the ſervility of their obedience, manifeſtly declared Chriſt and his apoſtles to be veſted with an authority and power derived from their Lord and King. So that mankind, ſeeing the apoſtles poſſeſſed of a power plainly paramount to the powers of all other known beings, whether angels or dæmons, could no more queſtion their being commiſſioned and inſpired by God, than doubt whether the magnificent frame of the univerſe, with all the various natures belonging to it, was the workmanſhip of his Almighty hands.

Thus by arguing from effects, notorious and viſible effects, to cauſes, the ſureſt method of inveſtigating and proving ſome kinds of truths, I have endeavoured to demonſtrate (if I may ſpeak without offence) the certainty of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, upon which the whole ſyſtem of Chriſtianity depends. For if Chriſt is not riſen from the dead, then, as St. Paul ſays, vain is the hope of Chriſtians, and the preaching of the apoſtles vain; nay, we may go ſtill farther, and pronounce vain the preaching of Chriſt himſelf. For had he not riſen, and proved himſelf by many infallible tokens to have riſen from the dead, the apoſtles and diſciples could have had no inducement to believe in him, that is, to acknowledge him for a Meſſiah, the "anointed of God:" on the contrary, they muſt have taken him for an impoſtor, and under that perſuaſion could never have become preachers of the goſpel, without becoming enthuſiaſts or impoſtors; in either of which characters it is impoſſible they ſhould have ſucceeded to the degree which we are aſſured they did, conſidering their natural inſufficiency, the ſtrong oppoſition of all the world to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, and their own high pretenſions to miraculous powers, about which they could neither have been deceived themſelves, nor have deceived others. Suppoſing therefore that Chriſt did not riſe from the dead, it is certain, according to all human probability, there could never have been any ſuch thing at all as Chriſtianity, or it muſt have been ſtifled ſoon after its birth. But we know, on the contrary, that Chriſtianity hath already exiſted above ſeventeen hundred years. This is a fact about which there is no diſpute; but Chriſtians and infidels diſagree in accounting for this fact. Chriſtians affirm their religion to be of divine original, and to have grown up and prevailed

under the miraculous aſſiſtance and protection of God; and this they not only affirm, and offer to prove by the ſame kind of evidence by which all remote facts are proved, but think it may very fairly be inferred from the wonderful circumſtances of its growth and increaſe, and its preſent exiſtence. Infidels, on the other hand, aſſert Chriſtianity to be an impoſture, invented and carried on by men. In the maintenance of which aſſertion, their great argument againſt the credibility of the reſurrection, and the other miraculous proofs of the divine original of the goſpel, founded in their being miraculous, that is, out of the ordinary courſe of nature, will be of no ſervice to them, ſince they will ſtill find a miracle in their way, namely, the amazing birth, growth, and increaſe of Chriſtianity. Which facts, though they ſhould not be able to account for them, they cannot however deny. In order, therefore, to deſtroy the evidence drawn from them by Chriſtians, they muſt prove them not to have been miraculous, by ſhewing how they could have been effected in the natural courſe of human affairs, by ſuch weak inſtruments as Chriſt and his apoſtles (taking them to be what they are pleaſed to call them, enthuſiaſts or impoſtors), and by ſuch means as they were poſſeſſed of and employed. But this I imagine to be as much above the capacity of the greateſt philoſophers to ſhew, as it is to prove the poſſibility of executing the proud boaſt of Archimedes (even granting his poſtulatum) of moving and wielding the globe of this earth, by machines of human invention, and compoſed of ſuch materials only as nature furniſhes for the ordinary uſe of man.

End of Vol. V.